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ABSTRACT

This monograph examines recent trends in the education of students from non-English-language backgrounds and cultures who may have learning difficulties or possible disabilities. Chapter 1 provides an overview of policy issues with respect to the education of students learning English as a new language and the interface between regular education, special education, and English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL)/bilingual programs. Chapters 2 and 3 describe procedures followed at Newport Elementary School in its efforts to enhance the learning opportunities of non-English-background students and to incorporate them into mainstream instruction. Chapters 4 and 5 present case studies of two such students experiencing learning difficulties and failing to progress in their current programs. Both studies illustrate how special attention and collaborative problem-solving are important for ensuring that all students are provided appropriate instruction. The final chapter focuses on assessment and instructional planning and implementation. Contains 172 references. (MSE)

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ED 416 685

Language in Education
Theory and Practice

Language Differences or Learning Disabilities?

Identifying and Meeting the Needs of Students from Non-English-Language Backgrounds

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Language in Education

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Identifying and Meeting the Needs of Students from Non-English-Language Backgrounds

Sandra Fradd

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Language in Education: Theory and Practice

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Vickie Lewelling, ERIC/CLL Publications Coordinator

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Introduction

In the last thirty years, many changes have occurred in the ways that the educational process in the United States has been conceptualized and implemented. Many reforms, however, have failed to consider the needs of all school-aged children. One of the greatest challenges that the nation faces in the coming decades is the effective education of all of its children, including those who come from non-English-language backgrounds and cultures.

This monograph focuses on recent trends in the education of students from non-English-language backgrounds and cultures who may have learning difficulties and possible disabilities. Educational programs for this group of learners do not occur in isolation. They occur within the context of general education, special education, and education provided through bilingual and ESOL (English to speakers of other languages) instruction. Each of these fields of education is distinguished by its own philosophy, approach to providing instruction, and way of training teachers. However, they are bound together by the requirement and the expectation that they will effectively teach the target students. The impetus for collaboration among teachers in these diverse fields has come from the realization that no single educator or area of expertise has all the knowledge, skills, and insights required to meet the needs of students with special learning needs. However, integrating these programs and establishing collaboration among educators who direct and implement them is somewhat like constructing a picture from a set of puzzle pieces that were not necessarily cut to fit together. There are gaps, overlaps, and differences that must be reconciled before the process can occur smoothly or the picture can be clearly observed.

Because the teachers who interact with students on a daily basis are in the best position to obtain accurate performance information, their voices must be articulated in the decision-making process (Carter & Sugai, 1989; Fuchs & Fuchs, 1990). By combining the strengths of these teachers with the experience of educators whose training has focused on students with disabilities or special needs or on students from non-English-language backgrounds--such as special education teachers and bilingual and ESOL teachers--learning opportunities for both students and educators can be enhanced. Increasing the understanding of educators who provide regular instruction and those who provide instructional support increases

opportunities for obtaining and interpreting student information in meaningful ways (Fradd, 1993).

The process of coordinating the instructional goals and policies of these different programs to meet the special needs of students from non-English-language backgrounds is the central focus of this monograph. The efforts of one school, Newport Elementary *, to enhance the learning opportunities of such students are presented as a case study of school change that illustrates how new policies are formed and new practices are implemented. Case studies of two non-English-language background students are also included to give the reader insight into real problems these students may encounter and to provide a step-by-step analysis of how the problems can be approached and solved.

Information presented in case studies can serve a number of purposes, such as providing a basis for discussion about assessment, instruction, and program development as they relate to students' needs. Case studies can also be used to illustrate how educators make changes in the policy and practices that affect teachers as well as students and their families.

The purpose of using complex, multifaceted cases is not only to provide practice in thinking through the various aspects of each case, but also to illustrate the linkages between the teaching and the learning processes. Students tend to learn what they have been taught, and without opportunities for appropriate instruction, students may fail to develop both the language and academic skills needed to perform successfully in the regular classroom. The use of cases, such as those included in this monograph, enables teachers to see the impact of their actions and to associate these actions with positive outcomes. This type of study can have a lasting impact on the development of effective programs as educators examine classroom environments and the task demands of their students (Carrasco, 1979; Edelsky & Rosegrant, 1981).

Case study methodology is useful in illustrating strategies of cooperative planning and organization and encouraging collaborative problem solving (Kleinfeld, McDiarmid, Grubins, & Parrett, 1983). The case studies included in this monograph are also used to illustrate policy development, school-based problem solving within groups, student performance, and specific instructional needs. Different voices are used to represent various aspects of the cases. For example, the voice of research and policy development is conveyed more often in the passive voice. Examples of teacher problem solving are framed more often in the active voice. The voice changes from

third to second person as the reader is asked to participate in the problem-solving process.

Chapter One of the monograph provides an overview of policy issues with respect to the education of students learning English as a new language and the interface between regular, special education, and ESOL/bilingual programs. Chapters Two and Three provide a description of the procedures followed by Newport Elementary in its efforts to enhance the learning opportunities of non-English-language background students and to incorporate them into the mainstream. Chapters Four and Five present case studies of two non-English background students who are experiencing learning difficulties and failing to progress in their current programs. Both studies show how special attention and collaborative problem solving are important for ensuring that all students are provided appropriate instruction. Chapter six fouses on assessment and instructional planning and implementation.

In considering these cases, you are encouraged to make notes, to think about how you would organize and apply information, and to use your own case studies illustrating specific student needs and the potential response options. By comparing what the teachers in the case did with your own insights and ideas, you may develop a keener vision of the changes that you would like to make in your educational setting and consider ways to implement these changes. The awareness of multiple options and diverse perspectives can translate into new possibilities and opportunities for meeting the needs of not only the target students, but many students and teachers who may be experiencing frustration rather than success in the teaching and learning process (Weismantel & Fradd, 1989).

Acknowledgments

Many people have contributed to the development of this monograph. Although it is not possible to name all of the many educators and students who have shared their insights and perspectives and who contributed to the development of this text, these contributions are valued nonetheless. Particular appreciation is expressed to Rosalia Fernandez Gallo, Patria Larrinaga McGee, Okhee Lee, Debra Meibaum, and Elia Vázquez-Montilla for their suggestions and contributions. Thanks to Victoria Evelyn for the technical assistance. A special note of appreciation is extended to Jeanne Rennie, Associate Director of the ERIC Clearinghouse on Languages and Linguistics, whose patience and support has made the development of the text possible.

1
Identifying the Educational Needs of Students Learning English as a New Language

The final decade of the 20th century finds public schools in the United States facing many challenges. While some of these challenges, such as increasing demographic diversity, are not new, the intensity of their current impact on the nation's school systems surpasses previous history. Other challenges, such as the expectation that all students should be included in the mainstream of education, are new (Staff, 1993). Many educators today have not been trained or prepared to deal with the instructional requirements of increasingly diverse groups of learners or the expectation that instruction will be provided in mainstream settings to students who were previously taught in special programs or excluded from school altogether (Fradd, Barona, & Santos de Barona, 1989; Staff, 1993). The combination of the increasing demand for specialized services to meet unique instructional needs and the need to train educators to provide effective services have become a national priority (National Academy of Education, 1991). The expectation that schools will provide more comprehensive and more student-relevant services than in previous decades also establishes the expectation that schools must reorganize to make these services available. In particular, the needs of students who are learning English as a new language and who may also have learning difficulties present challenges that are only beginning to be considered as a part of the regular school program.

Recognizing Educational Needs Resulting from Demographic Changes

Because of continued immigration and sustained high birthrates of non–English-language background (NELB) groups, the number of persons of all ethnicities--except those of Northern European origin--increased by more than 10% between 1980 and 1990 (U.S. Department of Commerce, 1992a). The number of persons who identified themselves within Hispanic and Asian groups increased the most—53% and 107% respectively (U.S. Department of Commerce, 1992a). If demographic changes continue, by 1998 one third of the nation's population will be from cultural or linguistic minority backgrounds,

making diversity more the rule than the exception (American Council on Education, 1988; Armstrong, 1991).

In considering the educational needs of NELB students whose families have not been a part of the traditional mainstream, there are many aspects of the learning process that can create barriers to academic success. One particular issue that has not yet been given serious consideration is the on-going language learning needs of students who communicate in languages other than English. Many states have established specific guidelines for identifying students as *English proficient* or *limited English proficient (LEP)*.* However, this identification process does not address these students' on-going need to develop English language proficiency beyond the most basic levels of communication at which they are determined to be English proficient (Fradd & Larrinaga McGee, 1993). The process does not address differences in cultural perceptions that can influence both interactional styles and the ways that information is interpreted and interfere with students' understanding (Steffensen, Joag-Dev, & Anderson, 1979; Steffensen & Joag-Dev, 1984; Westby, in press). The phrase *students who are learning English as a new language* is being used in this monograph to indicate the continuing need of students from non-English-* language-backgrounds--whether they are identified as English proficient or LEP--to develop both the academic and social language skills needed to participate within the academic and social mainstream of education, and ultimately of society. The term is not used here as a substitute for terms directly related to assessment and placement of students, but is offered to underscore the importance of on-going language development and instructional support, regardless of whether students are in bilingual, ESOL, mainstream, or exceptional student education (ESE) programs.

Recognizing the Need for Trained and Skillful Educators

For more than 20 years, Congress has provided federal funds to universities, colleges, and school districts to develop preservice and inservice teacher training programs in bilingual education and ESOL. Not every state has taken advantage of this opportunity. Only slightly

* The term *limited English proficient* is used in federal legislation to identify students who have not developed sufficient proficiency in English to participate in typical mainstream instructional programs, according to the Bilingual Education Act of 1988, P.L. 100-297.

more than half the states have established credentialing programs for those working with LEP students (Fradd, Gard, & Weismantel, 1988; Garcia, 1991), in spite of the fact that for over 10 years, every state in the nation has identified LEP students in their public schools (McGuire, 1982). Despite federal support, there continues to be a shortage of educators trained to work with LEP students (Garcia, 1991). This shortage has become critical in states with large numbers of LEP students, such as California, Florida, and Texas (Bradley, 1991; California Tomorrow, 1988).

The expressed purpose of special education programs, later referred to as exceptional student education in many states, was to provide instruction and support services not available in typical classroom settings. Within a special education context, a free appropriate public education is defined as "special education and related services that have been provided at public expense, under public supervision to meet the standards of the state educational agency and include preschool, elementary, and secondary school in conformity with an individualized educational program" (Education for All Handicapped Children Act, 1975, P.L. 94-142). One of the procedural safeguards of the legislation was the organization of a highly technical and comprehensive assessment and evaluation process required for special education placement. Assessment information was to be used to develop a specific individualized educational plan for each student who qualified for special education services. The plan included a statement of the current level of the student's educational performance, annual goals and short-term instructional objectives, the extent of the student's anticipated participation in regular education programs, and appropriate criteria and evaluation procedures to determine that program objectives are being achieved on at least an annual basis. P.L. 94-142 also stipulated that the assessment process must ensure that materials and procedures for testing children be selected so as not to be racially or culturally discriminatory, by requiring that "materials and procedures shall be provided and administered in the child's native language or mode of communication" (Section 8612 (5) (c)). This is the only federal legislation that specifies the use of non-English languages, and here it is only for assessment, not necessarily for instruction. The Act defines "native language" by referring to the Bilingual Education Act, which defines native language as the language normally used by individuals, or, in the case of a child, the language normally used by the parents of the child (Bilingual Education Act of 1988, P.L. 100-297).

Unfortunately, these technical requirements and regulations specified within the legislation on behalf of disabled students, instead

of providing more effective services, have had the effect of creating dual instructional systems. Legislative requirements that have moved school districts toward compliance with federal and state regulations have not necessarily promoted more effective instruction for the students for whom the regulations were written (Skrtic, 1991). For the past several decades in many school districts, instruction has focused on the remediation of a disability, rather than on the students' need to develop effective academic and social skills in English or in their native language. This approach has meant that many students with limited English proficiency have failed to make substantial progress in special education settings.

Although federal funds have been specified for preparing personnel to work with students with disabilities, few programs prepare educators to meet the needs of students from non-English-language backgrounds who may be experiencing learning problems or exhibit learning disabilities. Congress recently moved to improve training options by reauthorizing the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 (P. L. 94-142) under the new title, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (P. L. 101-476). This revised version of the earlier legislation emphasizes the need to provide appropriate instruction for culturally and linguistically diverse learners and directs the federal government toward an equitable allocation of resources for promoting educational opportunities for underserved groups. An important emphasis of this new legislation is on recruiting and training personnel who will demonstrate skill and competence in working with culturally and linguistically diverse learners (Staff, 1991). The potential benefits of this new legislation will not be felt for several years in terms of an increased pool of specially trained educators. This and other legislation have had the important immediate effect of underscoring the importance of effectively addressing the training needs of the nation's current and future teachers. Unless states, school districts, and schools also become actively engaged in upgrading educators' skills in identifying and meeting the needs of students from non-English-language backgrounds, the IDEA legislation will not accomplish its intended goals.

The fact that many states have not undertaken to develop training programs for teachers working with typical LEP students learning English as a new language exemplifies a larger issue: the lack of commitment to addressing the needs of students within their jurisdiction. Differences in academic achievement and socioeconomic status between mainstream and non-mainstream groups have been well documented (National Center on Education and the Economy,

1990; National Coalition of Advocates for Students, 1988; W.T. Grant Foundation, 1988). Non-mainstream students, such as those with limited English proficiency and those from non-dominant cultural backgrounds, generally have lower levels of literacy and higher school dropout rates than students from culturally dominant groups (California Tomorrow, 1988; Damico, Roth, Fradd, & Hankins, 1990; U.S. Department of Commerce, 1986; U.S. General Accounting Office, 1986; Wehlage, Rutter, Smith, Lesko, & Fernandez, 1989). Differences in educational attainment create a vast difference in economic achievement in terms of earning power (U.S. Department of Commerce, 1992b). Educational opportunities for mainstream and non-mainstream students continue to differ. Culturally and linguistically diverse students are often overrepresented in specialized programs with negative placement effects--such as Chapter I, dropout prevention, and alternative education--and are underrepresented in placements with positive effects--such as advanced-level science and math and dual enrollments in high schools and universities. Lack of access to quality programs that enable them to become successful learners has had the effect of ensuring that students from non-dominant or non-mainstream backgrounds are the recipients of instructional treatments different from students whose experiences have occurred within the mainstream (Cummins, 1986; Fradd, Weismantel, Correa, & Algozzine, 1988; 1990; Ortiz & Yates, 1983).

Recognizing Differences in the Identification of Student Needs

For several decades, it has been customary to provide students who are unsuccessful in mainstream classrooms with remedial instruction in Chapter I or ESE resource programs, outside of the mainstream settings. Such instruction has been seen as tangential to the purposes and the orientation of instruction within the mainstream programs. The intended purpose of these supplemental programs has been to provide instruction for students identified as mildly handicapped--a category that includes students with learning disabilities and emotional difficulties--who were not benefiting from instruction within the mainstream (U.S. Department of Education, 1989). The development of the supplemental programs had the effect of creating separate educational systems that were supposed to work in tandem with the mainstream programs, but that, instead, evolved as separate entities.

One of the most promising practices that emerged during the 1970s as a result of P. L. 94-142 is the expectation that mainstreaming will occur. This practice refers to the return of students placed in ESE programs to regular programs after their instructional needs have been remediated. In spite of the potential promise of the mainstreaming concept, since the time that it was specified in the federal legislation of the 1970s, little data have become available on the number of students who successfully returned from special to regular programs (Gartner & Lipsky, 1987).

The training of bilingual personnel and the use of non-English-language instruments and procedures to assess students being considered for ESE placement is an important safeguard of students' rights that has received minimal consideration. Students who are inappropriately placed in ESE settings where they are not provided the instructional strategies needed to develop the language proficiency and academic skills of their age peers have little hope of ever functioning successfully within the mainstream (Baca & Cervantes, 1989; Skrtic, 1991). Students in the process of learning English as an additional language tend to experience language arrestment, or the cessation of development, in their non-English language (Snow, Cancino, de Temple & Schley, 1991). When language development in the students' primary language of communication is arrested without concomitant development in English, students are at great risk for educational failure (Schiff-Myers, 1992). For young learners, language and cognitive development are inseparable (Rice, 1983). LEP students placed in instructional settings where support and specialized instruction developing English language proficiency are not provided may not only experience arrested language development in their non-English language, but in measured intelligence, or IQ (Wilkinson & Ortiz, 1986; Garcia & Ortiz, 1988). A significant loss of general cognitive ability can preclude students from ever developing the skills necessary to function in the mainstream. Such a loss is difficult to justify when special education placement is predicated on the determination that students' instructional needs cannot be met in typical regular education classrooms, but could be met effectively in ESE settings. If programs are designed to meet students' unique instructional needs and to provide the necessary support to ensure students will be successful, measurable positive outcomes should be a part of the overall process for determining not only the students' progress, but the capacity of the program to meet the students' needs (Fradd & Correa, 1989).

Recognizing Changes in Perceptions of Appropriate Instruction

There are several ways that perceptions of appropriate instruction for students with diverse learning needs is changing. These include (a) reconceptualization of disabilities, (b) definitions of "appropriate instruction," (c) the most appropriate location where instruction should occur, and (d) inclusion of students within society. Each of these developments is reviewed next.

Reconceptualization of disabilities. Many educators consider the general categories of mild retardation and learning disabilities to be socially constructed classifications used to justify the school system's failure to adequately address instructional needs (Coles, 1987; Rueda, 1989). Reform has been motivated by the perceived need to reconceptualize not only the terms and the ways that students are assessed, identified, and instructed, but also the rationale for the programs in which the services occur. Efforts vary from improving teacher education and reorganizing special education programs to completely eliminating special programs for all but the most severely disabled learners (Gartner & Lipsky, 1987; Rueda, 1989; Skrtic, 1991; Stainback & Stainback, 1984). The basic argument in this effort has been that the identification process is politically motivated. When political demands for educational accountability have been high, the identification and labeling of special needs students has been used to justify their removal from the general achievement testing process to preclude calculating their performance within district achievement means (Skrtic, 1991). The underlying motivation for this type of identification does not always occur on behalf of the students who are being addressed, but in the interest of making the system appear to be more effective to the public and to other evaluative audiences (Skrtic, 1991).

Definitions of appropriate instruction. The focus in instruction is changing from remedial to developmental—from the identification of specific learning problems to the development of potential. Remedial and developmental instruction are two fundamentally different educational approaches that have been organized as a result of divergent philosophical orientations toward the learning process. They reflect ways that students are viewed and the teaching/learning process is defined. Remedial instruction is an error-correction approach that seeks to correct or remedy previous mistakes. Developmental instruction considers errors a natural part of the learning process (Lindfors, 1987). An analysis of students' errors can provide insight into their level of functioning and instructional

needs. Students learning English as a new language need instruction that makes the language and the concepts meaningful—not instruction to remedy their errors (Wong-Fillmore, 1985; Wong Fillmore, 1991a). Even when students' errors are indicative of more serious learning difficulties, an understanding of how this information can be used to assist students in developing effective communication skills provides teachers with a positive, supportive philosophy on which to build success-oriented programs (Fradd & Larrinaga McGee, 1993).

Appropriate locations for instruction. After the passage of the original legislation, P.L. 94-142, the concept of mainstreaming had a great deal of appeal. Few substantive efforts were made to promote a move toward mainstream participation for special needs students (Fradd, Morsink, Kramer, Algozzine, Marquez-Chisholm, & Yarbrough, 1986-87; Skrtic, 1991). Not until attention shifted toward the "regular education initiative" was consideration given toward the responsibilities of regular education teachers for accommodating students' needs in typical classroom settings (Gartner & Lipsky, 1987; Stainback & Stainback, 1984). In more restrictive instructional environments, it was argued, students were more likely to observe and imitate students whose language and behavior served as inappropriate models than in regular classrooms. While opportunities to acquire inappropriate behaviors were increased in these environments, opportunities for meaningful engagement in learning were reduced (Gartner & Lipsky, 1987; Stainback & Stainback, 1984). The regular education initiative has grown beyond a focus on the most appropriate place for instruction to occur to a movement for the inclusion of all students.

Inclusion. Efforts to determine the most effective locations for educating students with disabilities have moved the discussion away from the concept of mainstreaming (placing students with disabilities within general programs), and toward arguments for including almost all students within the mainstream as the most appropriate setting for instruction. According to recent reports, inclusion is more than mainstreaming (Staff, 1993). The concept of mainstreaming evolved through the development of two separate and unequal systems, regular and special education. Mainstreaming refers to the process of taking students out of the larger, regular system, doing something with them in the smaller special system, and then returning them to the larger system once again. Implicit in that arrangement is the expectation that when students return, they are expected to be "normalized" or to participate within the standards established by the larger, regular system. Inclusion, on the other

hand, implies the existence of only one unified system that addresses the needs of all students equally without regard for status. There is no need for normalizing students in other environments. Establishing a unitary system and restructuring it to address the needs of all students are two complementary societal challenges (Staff, 1993).

A number of professional organizations have responded to the inclusion initiative by developing position papers, reports, and resolutions. These groups include both special and general education organizations, such as the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (O'Neil, 1993), The National Association of State Boards of Education (Staff, 1993), the Council for Exceptional Education (Council for Exceptional Children, 1993), and the Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps (Staff, 1993). These groups have been supportive of the concept of inclusion and have offered suggestions for its actual implementation. Other groups, such as the Learning Disabilities Association of America (Staff, 1993) and the Council for Learning Disabilities (1993a), while supporting the concept of inclusion, have also expressed reservations about the process. In extending the concept of inclusion, the term *full inclusion* has been used to refer to instruction in general education classrooms where students with disabilities were taught without the technical assistance and support necessary to address their unique learning needs and instructional requirements. Reservations about inclusion stem primarily from concern about full inclusion, if all students with disabilities are not provided with specific educational treatments designed to meet their unique needs. According to several professional groups, full inclusion of students with learning disabilities in general instructional programs would be an inappropriate instructional response to an important educational policy issue (Council for Learning Disabilities, 1993b; National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities, 1993).

The movement toward inclusion and shared responsibility has produced this significant positive change in terms of professional collaboration. Collaboration has begun to occur across all educational fields of expertise as educators have realized that no single group or field of study is able to provide all the knowledge, skills, and leadership required to meet students' needs. In terms of meeting the needs of students who are learning English as a new language, efforts to promote collaboration have also been strengthened by the realization that students' home language and culture play an important role in the learning process. Programs and training to promote collaboration among special education teachers, ESOL teachers, mainstream classroom teachers, counselors, and other

educators have proven successful in promoting shared responsibility for moving students toward successful learning (Heron & Harris, 1987; Hudson, 1989). In light of continued budget reductions, collaboration has also come to be viewed as a cost-effective means of resource utilization. As teachers learn from each other, they increase their own knowledge base and develop a keener understanding of the strengths and resources available to them (Fradd, 1993; Hudson & Fradd, 1990).

Because the concept of inclusion encompasses much more than instruction in regular classrooms, many areas of society will be affected when and if inclusion is fully implemented. Three areas particularly impacted by the policy are the schools, the community and community agencies serving persons with disabilities, and professional development programs for personnel working with the target learners. The implementation of a policy of inclusion will require a great deal more instructional support and technical assistance than have previously been available. The policy underscores the need for and importance of collaboration within and between educational settings and other service providers (Council for Exceptional Children, 1993).

Recognizing Different Responses to Reform

While leaders of reform efforts on behalf of students with special needs have called for change, the call to reform has gone unheard in many schools. Practitioners have been less than enthusiastic in their reactions to both mainstreaming and inclusion (Semmel, Abernathy, Buttera & Lesar, 1991). When teachers have not been trained to work with special needs students, when class sizes are large, or when students present unique behavioral or instructional needs, teachers are reluctant to embrace efforts that will make their jobs more complex and demanding. Moving students out of the mainstream into instructional environments with a reduced class size, special equipment and technology, additional resources, and other support options may be seen as more appropriate and justifiable than keeping students in mainstream classes where they receive little attention and are unable to keep up with instructional demands. In discussing decisions about mainstream or special setting placements for students, the tendency has been to think in terms of an either/or decision—either regular education or special education (Algozzine, Christianson, & Ysseldyke, 1982). With this attitude prevailing, once special education is decided upon, there is often no follow-up to ensure that the decision was appropriate or that modifications have

been made to meet students' real rather than hypothesized needs (Algozzine et al. 1982).

Prevailing attitudes that students who are not successful in mainstream settings would be better served in other instructional environments fail to consider other possibilities. Thinking of instructional decisions as either/or options has failed to create the attitude of inquiry and problem solving necessary to decide how best to respond to students' needs. While discussions over inclusion continue, an increased awareness of effective ways to address students' needs is a reality that cannot be overlooked. Willingness to learn, dedication to obtaining and sharing knowledge and resources, and a problem-solving approach toward finding effective solutions are important attitudes for meeting students' needs. At stake is the effectiveness of the outcomes of instructional placements, not the location in which instruction occurs.

The following chapters provide examples of ways that inquiry and problem solving can lead to changes in how that instruction is considered and implemented. The next two chapters provide an overview of issues and considerations related to the process of identifying and meeting the special needs of students from non-English-language backgrounds. These chapters are designed to invite the reader to join the problem-solving process by considering not only the information that is provided, but the ways in which this and additional information that the reader brings to the process can be used to promote effective instruction.

2
Newport Elementary School: The Beginnings of School Reform

During this school year, students with limited English proficiency enrolled at Newport Elementary School in record numbers. Because this was the first year that Newport had experienced such a large enrollment of students from non–English-language backgrounds, few resources or instructional materials were available for the teachers to draw from. The teachers had little experience or training in working with these students and had never made instructional adaptations for students who were not proficient in English. After several months, it appeared that many of these newly enrolled students were not benefiting from instruction, possibly because of their limited English skills. In response to concerns that these students were not making progress, the principal at Newport Elementary made the decision to establish a committee that would work to identify the needs of the newly arrived and already established students learning English as a new language and recommend procedures for improving their educational opportunities.

Developing a Philosophy

One of the first things that the committee did was to incorporate the philosophy of the school and the school district in the planning process. This philosophy emphasized "meeting the needs of students where they are and moving them to where they need to be in order to function successfully within society." The committee quickly realized that it was difficult to determine exactly where the students were in terms of their educational experiences and even more difficult to consider how to move them toward success, since the teachers and other students had difficulty communicating with the students. These new students could not be offered the same program that had worked well for the students who were proficient in English. At the same time, it did not seem wise to treat the students too differently from all the other students. While different instructional practices and materials would be necessary to avoid fragmenting programs, there also needed to be a centering force to guide program development. By focusing on the school's philosophy of working

with the students where they were, the committee members set about to examine the current program for the students.

As the group worked, a more comprehensive philosophy emerged that included concepts of inclusion in the process of assessment and instruction. The committee decided that the school, and perhaps the school district, would need to develop a continuum of services that would enable students to function within general education programs while being supported by ESOL instruction, and when necessary, by ESE instruction and support. An important part of these new plans would be the identification of programs and instructional strategies that would meet the students' needs. The group determined that providing special assistance and instruction to students who were learning English, some of whom might have disabilities, should not detract or diminish the quality or the availability of instruction for other students within the school.

The committee deferred from developing a special title or name for itself. Terms such as "LEP Committee," "Child Study Team," "Committee for the Handicapped," and "Multidisciplinary Team" had been used for state-authorized groups convened to address the needs of students who were not successful in regular education programs. Newport Elementary purposely chose not to name the new committee so that it could avoid many of the negative inferences and outcomes that the other titles had produced in the past. While the group had been officially convened by the principal, the members wanted to keep their roles as informal and flexible as possible. They remembered that frequently in the past when such committees had met, their task had been to determine a student's eligibility for placement in a program rather than to problem solve to meet students' needs in the most appropriate places. This process of establishing eligibility for special programs created a limited focus in terms of the overall effectiveness of identifying and meeting students' needs. The committee recognized that the needs of the students were larger than the process of determining eligibility and necessitated a reconceptualization of the way that instruction was provided.

The group also recognized that, in the past, when the focus was on individual students, educators often failed to recognize opportunities to promote effective instruction for many other students who might be experiencing similar difficulties. Focusing on a few students at a time could provide insight into the specific needs of these learners, but committee members also wanted to consider the option of assisting teachers in meeting the needs of many other students (Braden, 1989; Braden & Fradd, 1987). They decided that if the group

were convened only to make placement decisions, they would have accomplished very little. Committee members wanted to break with the traditional procedure of matching students to existing programs, but doing so would mean that they would have to create innovative responses that would be beneficial to both teachers and students.

Instead of examining the needs of each LEP student individually, the committee would consider the needs of groups of students at least for the first few months of operation. After a comprehensive plan was offered to the faculty for consideration, the committee would then begin to examine specific cases of individual LEP students experiencing learning difficulties. Committee members realized that the plan under consideration would involve teacher training and program evaluation as well as instruction and student services.

In order to begin the planning process and prioritize activities, the committee drew up a list of issues relevant to the development of their plan. These are included in Table 2-1.

TABLE 2-1
LIST OF CONCERNS REGARDING THE EDUCATION OF STUDENTS LEARNING ENGLISH AS A NEW LANGUAGE

- Instructional content and practices
- Appropriate resources and materials
- Assessment information and procedures
- Parent involvement
- Policies and mandated practices
- Faculty training requirements and inservice needs
- Program evaluation
- Collaboration among diverse program areas

Next, the committee decided to establish a systematic method for addressing these issues. They developed the following list of actions for obtaining information and making recommendations. This list is presented in Table 2-2.

TABLE 2-2
LIST OF ACTIONS FOR OBTAINING INFORMATION AND MAKING RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING INSTRUCTION FOR STUDENTS LEARNING ENGLISH AS A NEW LANGUAGE

- Identify specific needs of LEP students by grade and program.
- Compare needs across groups to determine large group or whole school needs.
- Identify components of instruction teachers and consultants believe to be central to academic success and achievement.
- Identify currently available resources and compare with what teachers and consultants believe to be necessary for students' academic success.
- Identify proactive strategies to meet the needs of specific groups of students.
- Review documentation and procedures for identifying and instructing students with special needs.

The first recommendation became the development of an on-going plan to assist the target students to participate effectively in school. This goal was selected from the list in Table 2-2 above, "Identify proactive strategies to meet the needs of groups of students," and modified to include specific suggestions for implementation. In order not to isolate these students, the committee began to consider ways of involving mainstream as well as LEP students. The committee concentrated on three aspects of the educational process: (a) opportunities for social interactions within the school environment; (b) clear communication of school expectations and requirements; and (c) opportunities to affirm cultural diversity within the instructional process (Baca, Collier, Jacobs, & Hill, 1990). Table 2-3 presents the modified recommendation and specific actions that could be taken to implement it.

TABLE 2-3
INVOLVING STUDENTS LEARNING ENGLISH WITHIN THE MAINSTREAM

Opportunities for Social Interaction	Communication of School Expectations	Affirmation of Cultural Diversity
Buddies: English proficient students to accompany new LEP students, provide general orientation, location of rooms, and general expectations for all students. *Peer Tutors:* Students trained to provide specific academic assistance and support. *Multi-Leveled Units of Instruction:* Instruction organized so that information is presented in key words and phrases as well as fully developed sentences and paragraphs, and in alternative methods of communicating.	*Family Orientation:* Development and translation of parent handbook, after review by cultural informants, who may suggest additional information. *Student Orientation:* 1.Translation of student handbook. 2. Review of school expectations. *Unifying School Themes:* Promoting high expectations for all students. Creating school-wide themes to promote unifying ethos.	*Use of Non-English Languages:* Use whenever possible, through recruitment of bilingual students and adults. *Celebrations of Diversity:* Provide opportunities for students and teachers to develop ways to celebrate diversity. *Multilingual Reading Days:* Have students bring books in other languages to read with each other and to share with monolingual English proficient students.
Sharing Times: Specific small group activities where students explore the world around them by discussing cultural similarities and differences.	*Verification Activities:* Allow students to discuss, and where appropriate, role play specific aspects of the school routine, and student-teacher or student-student interactions, and receive feedback on their understandings.	*Follow-Up Programs:* Encourage activities such as dances, potluck meals, etc., to emphasize cultural similarities as well as differences across cultures.

The list presented in Table 2-3 encouraged other teachers to join in thinking about ways to promote effective instruction and positive learning opportunities. When the committee shared the list with the

principal, she decided to involve the entire faculty as well as the students in rethinking the learning process.

You may want to do the same thing. You can use the lists presented here as a point of discussion for expanding learning opportunities within your school. A blank version of Table 2-3 is included here as Table 2-4 to facilitate planning.

TABLE 2-4
INVOLVING STUDENTS LEARNING ENGLISH WITHIN THE MAINSTREAM

Opportunities for Social Interaction	Communication of School Expectations	Affirmation of Cultural Diversity

As the committee began to organize, the members realized that there was much more to developing an effective school program than creating a philosophy and organizing a set of objectives and corresponding activities. They decided to involve the services of several consultants in thinking through the needs of the students within the school and the resources available to meet these needs. The following is a summary of the discussion that occurred during this part of the planning process.

Organizing Practices to Meet Students' Needs

Discussions about appropriate instruction for students who are not proficient in English often centers around the need to teach English language skills. While the importance of English language development is not disputed, the belief that English language proficiency is all that students require for success fails to consider a number of factors about the learning process (Alva, 1991; Lindholm, 1991). To achieve academic success, students must be able to examine and explore information in ways they can relate to and understand (Feagans & Farron, 1982). In order to participate successfully, there must be consistency between school expectations, task instructions, and the students' own understanding of these expectations (Fradd, 1991). Students must also hold positive perceptions of their own performance and their own ability to perform (Willig, Harnisch, Hill, & Maehr, 1983). In order to know how to perform, students require positive feedback that not only confirms what they are doing well, but that guides their performance toward further growth (Cazden, 1988). Instructional practices that promote exploration, congruence, positive self-image, and guiding feedback may not pose instructional difficulties for teachers working with students from their own language and culture. Differences in language and culture can pose significant barriers to learning that students are often not able to overcome without assistance (Castañeda, 1991). Suggestions for increasing success for students from non-English-language backgrounds are included in Table 2-5.

TABLE 2-5
SUGGESTIONS FOR PROMOTING SUCCESS WITH STUDENTS LEARNING ENGLISH AS A NEW LANGUAGE

- Encourage student participation and exploration by having a variety of materials and books, including some from students' language and cultural backgrounds.
- Promote student interaction in whole groups, cooperative groups, and pairs.
- Use nonverbal signals and sounds, as well as words, to promote understanding.
- Reduce communication overload by using key words and phrases that facilitate concept development.
- Use students' non-English language in instruction and interaction.

Organizing Programs to Address Cultural Diversity

Because effective school participation is not dependent on English proficiency alone, students need to learn how to participate, how to organize, and how to prepare to be successful. In effect, they must learn the culture of the school. Educators often lack an appreciation of the subtle and perhaps not so subtle differences between the ways that students have been socialized at home and the ways they are expected to behave and interact at school. Educators may lack an appreciation of the intellectual and cultural assets students bring to the learning process.

Cultural and linguistic differences often present barriers that must be overcome in order to engage students actively in learning (Damen, 1987). The congruence or divergence of the cultural values and expectations between teachers and students plays an important role in learning outcomes (LePage & Tabouret-Keller, 1982). For example, differences in values tend to create differences in approaches to completing a task, in understanding a sequence of events, and in interpreting what is funny or inappropriate. When teachers' cultural values are similar to those of their students, they tend to behave in congruent ways (Page, 1986). Congruence tends to promote acceptance and feelings of positive affect (Damen, 1987). Although congruence in these factors has been shown to increase through everyday interaction, it can be enhanced as teachers become aware of ways that promote student engagement (Westby & Rouse, 1985).

Adult-child interactions that occur within the home and community where the home language is used and perceptions of

appropriate discipline are other factors that influence not only students and educators, but the ways in which family members interact with and view school personnel (Iglecias, 1985). Additional areas of potential misunderstanding between the school and the home include varying perceptions of the roles family members play in the education process and differing perceptions of gender roles (Correa, 1989; Swisher & Deyhle, 1987). A list of cultural factors that influence teacher-student congruence, student learning, and family-school interactions is provided in Table 2-6. The items in this list can be used for observing students' interactions with other students from the same language and culture or with students from different languages and cultures. Observations of the interaction between adult peers can also provide insightful information. The list can also be used to develop informal questions for holding friendly discussions with students and teachers about their perceptions of cultural similarities and differences.

TABLE 2-6
SUGGESTIONS FOR LEARNING MORE ABOUT CULTURAL SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES

- Personal Perceptions of Self and Others
- Use and Expression of Time
- Use and Expression of Humor
- Social Space and Physical Space
- Common Sense and Logic
- Adult-Child Interactions
- Appropriate Child Discipline
- Roles and Responsibilities of Family Members within the Home
- Family Expectations in the Educational Process
- Gender Roles and Expectations

Information about a culture that is gained from reading should be supplemented by personal experience, discussions, and informed interactions with members of the culture (Asante & Gudykunst, 1989; Hernandez, 1989; Ogbu & Matute-Bianchi, 1986). Teachers and students can learn to question and validate cultural information in order to minimize stereotypes and misunderstandings. The information presented here is not intended to promote the politicization of education (Gray, 1991; Schlesinger, 1991). It can be used in identifying ways students and their families interact and

communicate that may be similar or different from educators' expectations. Knowing about these differences and similarities can be useful in gaining insight into ways of promoting effective communication and instruction (Banks, 1993; Schultz, 1994-95).

Organizing to Promote Language Development

Along with the development of proficiency in English, developing proficiency in students' non-English language can result in positive learning outcomes for the students. Although an obvious advantage, these benefits go beyond the process of enabling students to communicate in more than one language. The benefits include a positive sense of personal identification with multiple language and culture groups (Cummins, 1984); flexibility and creativity in problem solving (Cummins, 1977; Torrance, 1981; 1986); increased metalinguistic awareness (Bialystok, 1991); and higher levels of cognitive achievement (Cummins, 1991; Fradd, 1984, 1985). Most federally funded programs are designed to enable students to become proficient in English as quickly as possible (Fradd & Vega, 1987). This push for the rapid development of proficiency in English may come at the expense of the students' home language, especially for young children (Cummins, 1991; Fradd, 1984).

Controversy continues over the limitations of current programs and the use of the students' first language in instruction (Porter 1990, 1991; Wong Fillmore, 1991b). However, Krashen (1992) suggests that successful bilingual education programs actually result in faster acquisition of English. Hakuta (1990) emphasizes the positive influence native language development has on second language proficiency and suggests that the lack of first language development can inhibit the level of second language proficiency and cogntive academic development. Also, research has shown that maintainance of the native language at home fosters improved scholastic achievement (Dolson, 1985).

The loss of proficiency in the students' non-English language can also have negative consequences (Cummins, 1989; Wong Fillmore, 1991a). Because many parents and grandparents often do not acquire the level of proficiency in English of their children or grandchildren, students who develop proficiency in English while at the same time losing their ability to communicate effectively with family members in their non-English language also lose contact with stabilizing, supporting forces within their home environment (Wong Fillmore, 1991b).

Promoting Collaboration

As Newport Elementary School began to work toward implementing comprehensive changes, educators became aware of the importance of collaboration. They decided that in order to become effective collaborators, they would need to examine the collaborative process from both a school-wide and an individual teacher basis. The following represents an overview of the information that was developed to promote collaboration.

Collaboration refers to the sharing of information and the development of support across grades, educational settings, and services. Collaboration occurs naturally when there are identified common needs and resources, and the time and motivation to share them. Frequently, schools are such busy places that teachers know little about each other and have few notions about how they could collaborate. Learning to work with others to address the needs of specific students is not an easy process. Few educators have had training in this area, especially in terms of meeting the needs of students learning English as a new language. Although collaborative cross-disciplinary programs are beginning to appear, only a few educators have had training in applying multicultural concepts to meeting the needs of learners with disabilities (Figueroa, 1989; Langdon, 1989; Taylor, 1991). Yet the local school is an arena where collaborative activities can have an immediate impact on students and teachers. While there is a strong movement toward school-level collaboration, there are also obstacles to be overcome if the focus of collaborative activities is to include meeting the needs of students with disabilities, students in the process of learning English as a new language, and students who are members of both groups.

Changing Perceptions of Collaboration

Barriers to collaboration have grown out of federal and state funding policies and practices designed to promote effective instruction for learners with disabilities. Territorial rivalries within school districts as well as legal realities, such as weighted funding categories and requirements for program participation, all stand in the way of promoting integrated programs (Will, 1986). Although the services and programs were designed to assist students, supplemental and resource programs have had the effect of fragmenting instruction and promoting competition rather than collaboration. As educators begin to overcome these barriers, they realize that education can and must occur within a unified system, a system designed to maximize the use of all resources and talents.

Changes in educators' orientation toward collaboration have occurred as a result of changes in the ways effective instruction and school organization have been perceived and defined. Traditional indicators of effective education have begun to include new definitions of the teaching/learning process (Stedman, 1987). The evolution of indicators for effective schools has occurred through research and practice founded on a belief in the importance of success for all students, not just for those who are academically talented (Weismantel & Fradd, 1989). An important aspect of the emergence of collaboration is the shift from a perception of the principal and teachers as the only persons responsible for the educational outcomes to the perception of education as a process that includes teachers, parents, and students (Stedman, 1987). Evolution of the ways schools involve the people who work and learn continues as expectations for multicultural equity increase (Fradd, 1993).

Organizing Opportunities for Collaboration

Collaboration occurs in two ways, through both informal interpersonal interactions and structured formal interactions. Both forms are important and both can provide potentially positive outcomes. Collaboration that involves multicultural groups is not easy to achieve in either formal or informal processes. As an informal process, potential collaborators tend to gravitate toward those with whom they personally feel comfortable and compatible—often people with similar values and perspectives. The tendency to select persons with similar ideas and cultural backgrounds can have the effect of promoting the status quo. When people with different cultural values and orientations enter into the collaborative process, their ideas, their goals, and their motives may be diverse. Differences can lead to misunderstandings and possibly rejections. Collaborators working within diverse language and culture groups must be prepared to encourage and accept different ways of thinking, communicating, and organizing (Fradd, 1993).

One of the first steps in initiating formal collaboration across disciplines is the identification of the specific areas of interest, need, or expertise. Educators may be unaware of the types of information and assistance available from their potential collaborators. The initiation of collaboration must be based on a belief that each educator has strengths and limitations; each has resources and needs. For example, bilingual and ESOL teachers usually know about students' development of English skills and how particular students compare with others of the same age from the same language background. They know how to integrate language development information

with subject matter instruction and how to reduce the language demands while maintaining a focus on the content of the lesson. These teachers are likely to be in close contact with parents, siblings, and ethnic communities who may be able to serve as cultural informants, helping teachers and administrators to address the cultural as well as subject matter requirements of students (Baca & Cervantes, 1989).

Regular classroom teachers can often compare the performance of individual special needs students with that of mainstream students. They observe the students interacting with peers and know with whom the target students prefer to interact. These teachers also notice the types of activities that motivate students and are aware of the ways in which particular students approach or avoid tasks (Baca & Cervantes, 1989).

Exceptional student education teachers are frequently able to develop effective behavior management programs, break the learning process into specific steps, and instruct students in useful strategies for approaching and mastering academic content. They can observe behaviors and record and monitor learning. These facts can be useful in developing effective plans and programs (Wesson, 1991).

Teachers and parents can influence administrators and policy makers by asking the kinds of questions that focus on the process as well as on the results (Will, 1986); however, school-wide collaboration and program integration are difficult without administrative support (Heron & Harris, 1987). Examples of effective models of school-wide and small group collaboration exist (see, e.g., Allington & Broikou, 1988; Idol, West, & Lloyd, 1988; West & Idol, 1987), but few of these models include the cultural and linguistic diversity that often complicate the collaborative process (Baca & Cervantes, 1989; Clift, Veal, Johnson, & Holland, 1990; Correa, 1989; Hudson, 1989).

After reviewing information on collaboration, the committee at Newport Elementary School decided to identify the areas of expertise and potential collaboration available within the school. They developed Table 2-7 as a planning process for identifying areas of potential collaboration.

TABLE 2-7
POTENTIAL AREAS OF COLLABORATION IN MEETING THE NEEDS OF STUDENTS LEARNING ENGLISH AS NEW LANGUAGE

Settings and Types of Data to be Collected	Regular Classroom	ESOL Classroom	Bilingual Classroom	Exceptional Student Education Classroom	Additional Programs (Music, Art, Library)
Student Information					
Language Development					
Testing Measures and Data					
Working with Families					
Other Important Topics					

This chart can be modified for planning collaborative activities in your schools. As a follow-up activity, you may want to consider ways that you would use it to promote collaboration.

Cooperative Planning

Strategies have been developed for promoting collaboration to assist students with mild disabilities who are learning English as a new language. One such strategy is referred to as "cooperative planning" (Hudson & Fradd, 1990). An important feature of this strategy is that none of the personnel involved is recognized as more of an authority than the others. All are considered equals within their areas of expertise and all have areas in which they can develop new skills for working with this particular group of students. This process can also allow educators to determine the specific interventions that promote success (Damico & Nye, 1990). The steps in cooperative planning listed in Table 2-8 can be implemented through formal, planned procedures or through informal interactions among colleagues.

TABLE 2-8
STEPS IN THE COOPERATIVE PLANNING STRATEGY

Step	Action	Goal
1.	Establish meeting times and purposes	• A relaxed but formal atmosphere that emphasizes actions and results
2.	Establish and maintain rapport	• A supportive atmosphere that encourages free communication
3.	Discuss demands of each instructional setting	• An understanding of how task demands of instructional settings may vary or encourage/discourage student performance
4.	Target the students	• A small group of students to focus collaborator efforts
5.	Specify and summarize data	• A summary of what has been learned and what has yet to be learned about each student
6.	Discuss student information	• A presentation of each collaborator's ideas about students' needs
7.	Determine discrepancies between student skills and teacher expectations	• A list of specific areas where modifications can be made to provide consistency and support
8.	Plan instruction intervention and monitoring system	• A written plan to implement ideas and to observe/monitor results
9.	Implement the plan and follow up as needed	• Comparison of results; additional as-needed modifications; and, for future use, a record of interventions and the results

Adapted with permission from: Hudson, P. & Fradd, S. (1990). Cooperative planning for learners with limited English proficiency. *Teaching Exceptional Children, 23*, 16-21.

Before teachers at Newport began to promote formal collaboration activities with other educators with whom they were not accustomed to interacting, they reviewed the strategy and role played some of the ways that communication could be facilitated or inhibited. They also recognized that if they were to be successful, they would need to have not only a well developed plan, but also the skills to implement their plan. They considered strategies to avoid or counteract inhibiting

behaviors that might occur as interactions got underway, because they were aware that not everyone was interested in collaborating or committed to modifying the school program.

Collaboration with Families

Once teachers had begun successful cooperation among themselves in addressing students' needs, they also wanted to involve the families. They knew that the school experience for students with limited English proficiency, and probably for many others, was likely to be viewed from different perspectives (Casanova, 1990). Recognition of these potential differences was acknowledged in federal legislation that requires that parents be included in the planning process when students are placed in special education programs. Without information from the parents, the teachers realized that many assumptions they might be making about their students could be inaccurate. They knew that parents could provide important information about the students' status and behavior in the family and in the community, as well as information about family and community norms (Davis, 1989; Harding & Riley, 1986; Lehman-Irl, 1986; Saunders, 1986).

The teachers wanted to organize parent programs to promote a general understanding of the school system, as well as specific programs for fostering understanding and collaboration between families and the school (Edwards, 1990; FIRST, 1991). Learning about the family's experiences prior to and since their arrival to the United States, their religious beliefs and practices, parenting practices, and roles ascribed to family members and close friends became part of the school plan for collaboration (Correa, 1989). Suggestions that the teachers developed for involving parents in the school are included in Table 2-9.

TABLE 2-9
SUGGESTIONS FOR INVOLVING PARENTS IN COLLABORATION

- Cultural events and activities that involve students and families
- Displays of student art and other products that families can enjoy
- Written and oral communication in the language of the home
- Designated school personnel whom the families can contact to obtain information about school events, student achievement, and concerns
- Trained interpreters and translators to serve as informants as well as communicators in working with families and school personnel
- Handbooks and written forms available in the languages of the families represented in the school
- Trained personnel who discuss student performance and school culture with families

As the teachers at Newport discovered, collaboration is a process of sharing resources and ideas, of planning and organizing to promote specific outcomes. When collaborators identify common purposes and goals, the process occurs naturally and smoothly. However, when there are differences in expectations, outcomes, and perceptions of success, the collaborative process may become complex and possibly artificial. Differences in language and culture can contribute to the difficulties that potential collaborators may encounter in sharing resources and working together. As the educators at Newport continued to develop collaborative networks, they realized the benefits of their collaboration. They also began to promote ways to involve students within the collaborative process by developing cooperative problem-solving tasks and activities in which all the participating students benefited (Johnson & Pugach, 1991).

3
Making Language Development a Central Focus of Instruction

During the first stages of planning, the committee began to realize that there were some aspects of the instructional process, as it related to the needs of students not yet proficient in English, with which teachers at the school were unfamiliar. A major aspect involved the use of the students' non-English languages in instruction, interaction, and assessment. Only one of the teachers was proficient in a language other than English. Even after an initial inservice training, when the activities involving the use of non-English languages were implemented, several teachers indicated that they felt uncomfortable with students communicating in languages other than English. One teacher had made it clear that only English would be used for any type of communication in her room. Certainly these teachers were well-meaning and had the interests of the students at heart. But the consultant who led the inservice training had also been clear in sharing the research on second language acquisition: Students who have well developed proficiency in their home language are able to learn a new language, such as English, more easily and to master academic concepts more readily than students who have limited proficiency in either their home language or in English (Cummins, 1984; Snow et al., 1991).

As the committee of educators at Newport Elementary School collected and reviewed information on effective instructional strategies, they became increasingly aware that LEP students, like all learners, need to develop proficiency in the language of their environment, namely English, and that there are certain methods that can facilitate the learning of English. They also realized that some aspects of language learning occur faster than others. As a result of these insights, the committee decided to develop a plan to ensure that students developed the types of proficiency that would enable them to participate in both social and academic interactions. They reasoned that the language needed for academic participation included an understanding of instruction in core subject matter curricula. Students also needed to develop and use higher order cognitive skills in order to participate in lessons where information

was not clearly observable, and they needed to be able to organize, synthesize, evaluate, and apply information they were learning.

Language Considerations

Academic language development has often not been the focus of programs for students with special learning needs or for students learning English (Cummins, 1984). Students who are limited in proficiency in the language of instruction may be limited in the ways they are able to learn or to benefit from instruction. It could be difficult to learn a new language in an environment where there is much talk but little comprehension. Previously, when students not proficient in English were placed in regular classrooms, often there was little, if any, provision made for helping them understand and communicate. When these students attempted to converse in English, their language was limited, and they found themselves unable to communicate meanings and intentions. Although students often realized they were expected to interact and participate, they lacked the skills to do so (Carrasco, 1979). To make matters more difficult, not only were the students expected to contribute to discussion and show what they knew, they were informally graded on how they responded to teachers' questions (Gallimore & Tharp, 1991).

As the students were viewed as unsuccessful either by themselves or others, they began to internalize feelings of inability and to seek other avenues of expression. What could initially be a second language learning need developed into a learning problem for many students. The students needed access to meaningful instruction and appropriate ways of responding. The committee also realized that not all of the communication difficulties students experienced in the process of learning English could be interpreted as second language learning needs. Students in the process of learning English could also have real disabilities. In both cases, students required meaningful and supportive learning opportunities.

Previously, when students were unsuccessful in regular programs, the tendency was to collect evidence of what the students were unable to do, and then refer them for ESE assessment (Barona & Santos de Barona, 1987). Recently, a shift has occurred toward using instructional assessment to find out what students are able to do, to focus instruction on areas of strength, and to provide students with tasks only slightly more advanced than their current performance level. Instructional assessment based on students' performance focuses on what students can do, rather than what they cannot do. The process of using students' products and performances in

identifying their strengths and limitations can promote effective instruction (Fradd & Larrinaga McGee, 1993).

The committee decided to use an instructional assessment approach to identify students' educational needs. They developed suggestions for promoting instructional assessment across classrooms and instructional settings. These suggestions are presented in Table 3-1.

TABLE 3-1
SUGGESTIONS FOR COLLECTING INFORMATION ON STUDENTS' INSTRUCTIONAL NEEDS

- Gather background information on the students, such as how long they have been in school, when they arrived, how regularly they attend class.
- Observe when and where students use non-English languages; incorporate the use of non-English instruction, where appropriate, to promote communication and understanding.
- Observe how student-student and teacher-student interactions may be congruent or incongruent; discuss cultural and linguistic similarities and differences with students and elicit their observations; use their input in modifying instruction, promoting cultural understanding, and increasing participation.
- Compare students' performance across settings.
- Elicit suggestions from adults from the same linguistic and cultural background to increase cultural and linguistic relevance of instruction across a variety of subject areas; incorporate suggestions in the instructional process and note changes in student performance; discuss modifications with students and elicit their input.
- Discuss cultural similarities and differences in expectations for school performance and achievement with persons from the same language and cultural background; modify interactional and presentational styles and note changes in student performance; discuss modifications with students and elicit their observations.
- Develop a portfolio of the students' products they believe to be representative of their best work, including art work, written and oral language samples, video clips, and materials; have other students evaluate products and provide feedback on performance.
- Ask students for input and feedback in developing and evaluating instruction and performance.

Promoting English Language Proficiency

In addition to developing strategies for gathering information on students' performance and making appropriate instructional modifications based on this information, the committee realized that they needed to know more about the second language learning process from a research perspective. After reviewing the literature, members summarized key factors related to the learning of English as a new language. They recognized that many of these factors might not typically be considered in planning programs for students with limited proficiency in English for full classroom participation without support. The factors the committee developed are listed in Table 3-2.

TABLE 3-2
FACTORS INFLUENCING ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING

- Age on arrival in the English-speaking environment
- Length of residence in current setting
- Prior educational experiences in other U.S. settings and in home country
- Availability of support for academic learning and opportunity to use English within school setting
- Availability of support for academic learning outside school
- Oral proficiency in home language(s)
- Literacy skills in home language(s)
- Family expectations for academic success
- Opportunities for success within educational program

The committee prepared a brief presentation for the faculty to assist them in conceptualizing the best approaches for meeting students' needs. The committee believed that it was important for the faculty to become aware of current research because some of these findings were inconsistent with beliefs that some faculty members held about learning English. The committee combined the information in Table 3-2 with the additional information presented below to encourage discussion and planning across the school.

Two findings the committee believed were particularly important were that (a) young children do not learn a language faster than older learners, and (b) a great deal of time and instruction are required in order for students to develop academic language proficiency (Harley, 1986).

Many students who are born in the United States are raised in environments where a language other than English is used to communicate at home. These students may have limited exposure to English until they arrive in school and are likely to experience many of the same difficulties in learning English as recently arrived immigrant students. Longitudinal research on the length of time required for students to develop academic skills in their second language is available from a number of sources (see, e.g., Cummins, 1981; Cummins & Swain, 1986). One of the most comprehensive studies conducted in the United States used standardized achievement measures with three cohorts of LEP students from middle class backgrounds, aged 5–7, 8–11, and 12–15 (Collier, 1987; Collier, 1988; Collier & Thomas, 1989). The cohort of students aged 8–11 mastered age-appropriate academic skills the most quickly. These students achieved at the 50th percentile on nationally normed tests of math computation and language arts after approximately two years. However, four to six years were required for the same students to achieve at a similar level in the areas of reading, science, and social studies. Students in the 5–7 age cohort required six or more years to achieve similar age-appropriate academic skills. The older students, ages 12–15, required the greatest amount of time to reach the national average on the standardized tests across subject areas. Many of the students in this age cohort never did score at or above the 50th percentile during the time they were in high school (Collier, 1989).

Older students are actually more efficient language learners than younger students. The major difference between older and younger learners is that older learners must learn and accomplish a great deal in terms of remembering and understanding, as well as organizing and synthesizing information, if they are to participate on par with their age group peers. Younger students are not expected to know and do as much, and therefore appear to be learning and speaking well when they have acquired only a limited vocabulary. Instruction for younger students is often related to concrete experiences and tasks, while learning for older students tends to be more abstract and decontextualized. Even though older learners enter the learning process with more highly developed language learning skills, they encounter many difficulties in mainstream classrooms because they must learn fairly sophisticated academic content in their new language. When there is a great deal of knowledge and information to be learned without support provided by instruction in their native language, older students are often not able to keep up with their age peers. Students who continue to receive instruction in their native

language tend to outperform students who receive instruction only in English (Harley, 1986).

Determining students' prior educational experience and previous opportunities for learning in both English and their native language is an important first step to making decisions about students' instructional needs. However, it is important not to equate exposure to English with English language learning. Many students are exposed to language by way of television and radio, but do not necessarily comprehend or learn to communicate. Even exposure to instruction in regular English-only classrooms can be the equivalent to exposure by way of television if students are not provided with comprehensible language and appropriate opportunities to participate and to use language.

While second language acquisition proceeds in many ways like the development of the first language, the development of academic language skills presents major differences. Academic language development usually occurs with monolingual students after a foundation of social language skills has been established. The development of social language foundation generally occurs during the first 7 years of life. Students who enter school with proficiency in only a non-English language have yet to develop social language skills in English, let alone academic language skills. They are nonetheless expected to learn academic content in English when they are placed in mainstream classrooms. Without specific language support and opportunities to understand and use the new language in meaningful contexts, students will probably find it difficult to learn and are not likely to succeed in academic subjects. The committee concluded their presentation by preparing the information presented in Table 3-3 to encourage the faculty to further consider ways for promoting effective English language development.

Table 3-3 was adapted with permission from Damico & Hamayan (1990, November). *The role of second language acquisition in assessment and intervention.* Paper presented at the meeting of the American-Speech-Language Hearing Association, Seattle, WA.

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TABLE 3-3
DEVELOPING EFFECTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS FOR NEW ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

• **Develop an Oral Language Base.** Most school-aged children have developed an oral language base in English and have been exposed to print prior to entering school. Students from non-English language backgrounds often have not developed equivalent oral language skills in English. Many have had little, if any, experience with print in English. What adaptations in the instructional environment could educators make to assist these students?

• **Become Aware of Students' Inter-language System.** English-background students have only one language system. When Non-English language background students learn English, they have at least one other language system already in place and are likely to develop an inter-language system that eventually becomes two separate systems. What adaptations can be made to accommodate students in the process of developing academic and social skills in English?

• **Provide Students Access to Appropriate Language Models**

English-language-background students usually have many language models and opportunities to interact and to develop a language base. English-as-a-new-language learners have few English language models or opportunities to interact with native English speakers. What adaptations to the instructional environment can be made to give all students access to native English speakers and positive language models?

•**Use Concrete Experiences.** When children are in the process of learning English, their language development is usually based on concrete learning experiences in natural settings. Non-English language background students are often expected to learn English in highly structured environments with limited opportunities to integrate language input and meaning. What adaptations can be made to help these students utilize input from their environment to function successfully in English?

• **Promote Cultural Understanding.** A person's home language is usually highly personalized and reflects both the general culture in which the language is used as well as the individual's unique personality. Initially it is difficult for non-English language background students to integrate into the culture where English is used because they do not have an understanding of cultural expectations that accompany the language. What adaptations can be made to assist students to participate effectively in the English language culture?

• **Recognize that Developmental Errors Can Promote Learning.** When young children are in the process of acquiring their home language, they are not expected to communicate competently in that language. Family members and strangers recognize that language acquisition is a developmental process for young children. However, when Non-English language background students enter school and begin instruction, they are often corrected because of errors in grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. What instructional adaptations can be made to enable both teachers and students to be comfortable with developmental language learning errors?

• **Understand Students' Social and Emotional Needs.** English proficient students have access to the total curriculum, including counseling. Students who are not yet English proficient are often excluded from available curriculum and support services until they develop proficiency in English. Therefore, the social and emotional needs of these students often go unmet. What adaptations can be made to enable students to participate in the total curriculum and benefit from the support services?

•**Address Prejudice and Bias.** Non-native users of English may experience negative attitudes and prejudice toward their native languages and cultures or toward the way they use English. What adaptations to the teaching and learning environment can be made to help all students to develop an appreciation of cultural and linguistic

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differences? How can students' tolerance and acceptance of differences be increased?

- **Promote Opportunities for Social and Academic Language Learning.** Some students are able to participate socially and carry on lengthy conversations in English. As a result, they often do not appear to be limited in English proficiency. However, there is a difference in the language proficiency required to converse about social activities and the ability to perform academic tasks. What adaptations can be made to enable all students to develop social and academic language?

The faculty agreed that the questions raised were important and should be addressed at each grade level in all areas of instruction. The discussion was carried on throughout the school. As the educators became more aware of the importance of language development within instruction, resources were organized and developed to enhance the language learning process. Concrete activities were organized to promote students' understanding and to relate learning to abstract language development. As they made instruction more comprehensible and meaningful, the teachers realized that their efforts were benefiting not only the target students, but many other students as well.

Promoting Different Aspects of Language Learning

As the educators became engaged in promoting effective instruction, they discovered a number of topics that required specific attention. These topics are discussed next.

Promoting accurate pronunciation. A student's pronunciation and differentiation of sounds may lag behind comprehension. Making the associations between sounds and written symbols is not easy for language learners, as each language has its own sound system, and the sounds that exist in one language do not always occur in another. Differentiating between sounds is difficult because each sound occurs for only a brief period of time. Sounds change depending on their location or relation to other sounds; for example, sounds located at the beginning or end of a word are different from those in the middle. Often students do not develop the fine discrimination of sounds, especially vowel sounds, until long after they have begun to communicate well in English; thus drill and practice in phonics may have little value for students in the process of developing the English sound system. Students may also fail to understand line drawings and pictures illustrating examples of vowel sounds. Illustrations of short and long vowel sounds often remain a mystery for several years after English language instruction has begun. Results of tests that ask students to make fine discriminations

in sounds may indicate that the students have auditory or perception problems. This may be an accurate finding; however, the results may also mean that the student simply has not learned to hear those sounds yet. With instruction, experience, and practice in applying information in context, students learn to make successful discriminations.

In English, the sound-symbol relationship is difficult because there are many vowel sounds that are represented by the same symbol. There are also many different ways that both vowel and consonant sounds can be represented. Because they have not had an extensive period of time to listen to and to make sounds, non-English-language background students may not be aware of differences in sounds that change the meaning of utterances. Practice in changing meanings by changing sounds can be helpful for students developing the sound-symbol relationship. Once students understand the rules for using different symbols, spelling and writing become easier. However, the inconsistencies in English spelling and pronunciation make spelling difficult for most learners. Internalization of rules is achieved through experience, authentic communication, and interactions rather than drill and practice (Cheng, 1987).

Providing appropriate reading instruction. The process of developing literacy is complex and multidimensional (Anderson & Joels, 1986). Students at the beginner level often become aware of environmental print—street signs, food labels, advertisements, and other media—as one of their first experiences with literacy. Students at this level may see the representation of McDonald's Golden Arches as a symbol for food. They may make a meaningful association between an experience and a symbol or a set of words (Raffalclini, 1988). When this association occurs, students have taken an important step toward understanding the symbolic nature of writing. They may quickly progress to associating other words and signs with their meanings. Teaching students to access this information can provide them with a sense of understanding and control over their environment. Although students at this level may not be able to express ideas in complete English sentences, they have ideas and the desire to express them. With assistance and support from adults and peers, students with limited English proficiency can express themselves comprehensibly in writing. A set of exercises to help students develop literacy can include copying and discussing signs they see in their environment; keeping logs of new signs and symbols they have observed; drawing signs and sharing these with friends in the form of flash cards or other games. If a camera is available,

students may want to develop a photojournalism display or a pictorial book that includes the contributions of many students. Students can be encouraged to make meaningful associations between the symbols they encounter in their world and the meanings these symbols may have for their safety and well-being. As students make these associations, they become more aware of other aspects of reading and writing.

An awareness and an understanding of the meaning of language can be developed through rhymes, songs, and predictable stories. Even middle and high school students like to memorize age-appropriate rhymes and songs, which provide insight into the culture, predictable language, and practice with the sounds of the language. Once students understand language patterns, they can begin to use these patterns in social conversation (Wells, 1986). They can also use this information to predict how the language system works—an important precursor to predicting and inferring events and outcomes and developing higher order thinking skills. Inference skills, however, develop only after a great deal of experience with the language (Tough, 1976, 1977).

Authentic language is language that students use to express their own ideas, experiences, and interests. It differs from school language, which often focuses on responses to pre-established questions and on information not of direct interest to students. Students need to have opportunities to use authentic language, to express their own ideas, and to interact with others in meaningful ways. Because of their limited access to native-English-speaking language models, LEP students' opportunities to hear and to use authentic language in English are especially important (Hudelson, 1986).

Moving from oral to written language. Some students with prior literacy experience may move from oral to written forms of language easily, especially when the written form of the language is closely related to the oral form. Students learn to read most easily in a language they can speak (Lindfors, 1987). In the early stages of learning, oral language and its written counterpart are similar; however, as learning progresses, written material becomes more abstract and complex, and its language diverges from the oral, which is generally more context-embedded, more concrete, more related to the present time. The written form becomes more context-reduced, more abstract, and more apt to include ideas and topics from other times and places (Cummins, 1984). As the two forms of expression diverge, mastering literacy skills becomes potentially more difficult and more dependent on an understanding of the form and structure of the language, not just the written symbols or words. Thus, when

students first learn to read, they are presented with words and phrases that correspond directly to real items and actions. These words and phrases are usually paired with pictures and activities linking print with meaning. However, as students learn more about reading, they begin to learn to categorize and specify meaning. They are also expected to grasp subtle differences implied by word choices. These differences in vocabulary choices are culturally based. Students with limited access to cultural information may need guidance as well as instruction in order to make fine discriminations in meaning. They may also require assistance in moving from the real world of here and now, where they can use words like *this* and *that* combined with gestures, to the abstract world of specificity and implication.

Incorporating higher order thinking skills. As time-consuming and difficult as learning to read may be, it is not as difficult as the development of more advanced literacy skills (Cummins, 1984; Westby, in press). Learning to use academic language requires the development of higher order thinking skills. The abilities to categorize, to see relationships, and to evaluate and organize information are essential to success in subject areas such as mathematics, science, and social studies. LEP students who can communicate socially in English are often not provided with opportunities to learn academic language skills. It is possible to promote cognitive and academic language development that, in turn, promotes successful mainstream participation; unfortunately, educational policies related to mainstreaming tend to move students toward the regular classroom without providing the instructional support necessary for successful participation. Students who are not proficient in English often become so frustrated that they withdraw from the learning process altogether (National Coalition of Advocates for Students, 1988; Natriello, McDill, & Pallas, 1990).

A variety of strategies may need to be used to promote social and academic language development, including the following:

- making certain that students understand the meaning of words and phrases in a variety of contexts.
- linking understanding with personal experiences and written texts.
- identifying words, phrases, and concepts that are typically difficult for students and making certain that sufficient instructional attention is provided to ensure learning.
- identifying difficult terms and abstract concepts within each lesson and promoting learning through a variety of activities and experiences.

• promoting peer mediated learning and explanations in English and non-English languages.

An understanding of similarities and differences in culture is useful in promoting higher order thinking. Some ideas and concepts are more easily presented and understood in some languages than in others.

The faculty determined that in addition to using this information to plan activities and instruction, teachers can provide students with insight into academic and social interactions and promote appreciation of cultural diversity. They decided to keep records of successful and unsuccessful strategies and implemented whole group and small group interventions that promoted successful achievement. As the teachers collaborated, they became aware of many different areas where they were meeting with success. As a result of their new orientation toward success, the teachers were surprised when they encountered students who continued to experience difficulties.

4

Language Differences or Learning Difficulties? The Case of Alejandro Acosta

Although the committee at Newport Elementary School had initially planned to focus on organizing the school to meet the general instructional needs of large groups of students, the members recognized that they would also have to consider the special needs of individual students. Several reasons were identified for considering students as individual learners. No group plan could meet the needs of all the students. As the Newport teachers worked to develop new skills and strategies to facilitate learning, they realized there was still much to know and to do. The committee approached the identification of special needs students from the perspective of assisting both the students and their teachers. This approach focused on a problem-solving process of organizing and adapting instruction and assessing students to determine what, if any, additional needs they might have that should be considered.

The committee was not surprised when a teacher asked if she could refer a special case to them for suggestions of how to provide effective instruction. The teacher, Ms. Homes, said that she was at her wits end because nothing she had done seemed to be effective and the student's behavior seemed to be getting worse.

Alejandro Acosta, the student whose case Ms. Homes referred, presented the first opportunity for the committee to examine the effectiveness of the process they had developed. Alejandro had arrived at Newport Elementary School when he was 10 years old. He did not come directly from his native country, El Salvador. He had lived in several other places before his father found the small apartment near the school where Alejandro and his brothers lived. Here is Alejandro's story as the social worker and teachers understood it at the time that Alejandro's case was first brought to the committee.

Alejandro had lived in a rural part of El Salvador until one day when his father told him to pack the small sack his mother had made him. Alejandro, three of his four older brothers, two uncles, and his father walked and caught rides from El Salvador through Mexico until they came to the U.S. border. After several attempts, the group

was finally able to cross the border and proceed toward their first destination, Washington, DC. Many other Salvadorans had moved to the nation's capital and the Acosta family anticipated that they could receive assistance in getting settled in the new country they hoped to adopt.

Life had not been easy in El Salvador. A lot of fighting had gone on. Alejandro's brothers and uncles were in danger of being conscripted by the government and placed in the national army, of being killed as supporters of one side of the conflict or the other. The father decided to take most of the young men north where they expected to find work and safety. They had hoped that as soon as they were established, they would be able to send for the rest of the family. However, Mexico would not allow them to settle there, so they continued on further north to enter the United States.

Once they arrived in Washington, DC, life was not what the group had expected. The older men were unable to find work. They needed work in order to support themselves and to send for the rest of the family. Work and a safe place to live were priorities. A Salvadoran friend told the group about a town were he thought they would be safe and could find work building houses. Many Salvadorans were already there. The friend said he was going and would take the group with him. When they arrived, they found the area reminded them of their homeland. Newport Elementary is located in this town. It is the first school in the United States in which Alejandro has been enrolled.

Alejandro was almost 11 years old when he first started school in the United States. He had been in the country for four months when he began school at Newport. Alejandro was placed in fourth grade although he could not read or write in English. He could actually read and write only a little in Spanish. In El Salvador, Alejandro's education was interrupted several times by military conflict, and then by the travel out of the country. It had been almost six months from the time the group left El Salvador to the time Alejandro enrolled at Newport.

Ms. Homes described Alejandro as a polite student who watched the other children and tried to do what they did but never completed any of the assignments, not even the ones she thought to be at his level. Sometimes Alejandro got up and walked around the room. Occasionally, he looked at the other students' papers. Ms. Homes was emphatic: Alejandro's behavior was disruptive and caused difficulties. She found his presence in her class especially disruptive because she was unable to communicate with him. Recently, Alejandro had carved several big "NOs" in his papers, sometimes

scratching through to the desk. Ms. Homes wondered if Alejandro might have some type of behavior disorder or learning disability.

Alejandro first came to the attention of the committee after Ms. Homes and Ms. Speaks, the ESOL teacher, began collecting information on Alejandro's behavior. Both found the disruptive behaviors increasing. The teachers asked for assistance in meeting Alejandro's needs after they collected some basic information about him. This information is summarized here.

- Alejandro was almost 11 years old and had been enrolled in fourth grade for four months.
- Alejandro lived with his father, brothers, and uncles who were manual laborers who spoke little English.
- Alejandro's prior schooling had been interrupted by military conflict in El Salvador and flight from the country.
- Alejandro had limited social and academic English language skills.
- Alejandro had become a non-participating student who was sometimes disruptive in class.

The committee members felt they really knew little about what Alejandro could do or what he would like to do. The committee, working with the two collaborating teachers, identified specific classroom tasks that students were typically expected to do. They agreed to determine the activities that Alejandro could do and those he attempted unsuccessfully. Observations would occur during instruction in the core curriculum and during academic language skill development. Table 4-1 provides the data collection checklist the group developed.

TABLE 4-1
SUGGESTIONS FOR COLLECTING INFORMATION ON STUDENTS' PERFORMANCE

Regular Classroom Teacher, ESOL Teacher, and Bilingual Teacher

1. Describe the student's social activities and interests.
2. With whom does the student interact? When does the student interact with others?
3. Describe the student's participation in physical education and other special programs.
4. Describe performance in activities such as:
   - copying from chalkboard
   - copying from written texts
   - sharing ideas and experiences orally
   - telling or retelling stories orally
   - putting stories and ideas in writing
   - computing mathematics problems.
5. Describe the student's English social language proficiency in interactions with other students, with teachers, and other adults.
6. Describe the student's non-English language proficiency in social interactions with other students.

Sorting out what might be a disability from a difficulty in learning English was not a simple task (Duran, 1989; Pianta & Reeve, 1990). Some of the committee members were concerned that Alejandro's academic achievement might be low in Spanish as well as in English because his had not attended school on a regular basis. The school experience that he did receive in El Salvador might be quite different from the experience at Newport, and he might not have the skills or the background knowledge expected of a boy his age.

Two members of the committee offered to visit Alejandro's classroom to observe his language use and his interactions with other students and teachers. Their observations provided information that could be used to plan to meet Alejandro's needs. They noticed that Alejandro wanted to interact with the English proficient students, but did not know how. The group developed science activities that could be carried out in cooperative groups to provide opportunities for Alejandro to learn and to interact with his peers. Peer tutors were taught to assist him and to make him a responsible member of the learning group. Activities included higher order thinking as well as the development of social and academic language. By participating in

the group science activities, Alejandro learned to organize, categorize, and describe objects and to predict, verify, and report relationships. Parallel activities were developed in both English and Spanish so that progress could be monitored in both languages.

In addition to developing suggestions for collecting information on Alejandro's performance, the committee suggested that the family be involved in identifying and addressing his learning needs. Table 4-2 provides suggestions for information that could be obtained from the family.

TABLE 4-2
SUGGESTIONS ON STUDENT INFORMATION TO OBTAIN FROM FAMILY MEMBERS

1. Prior schooling experience (grade levels and years attended, progress reports or reports cards, if available)
2. Achievement in previous school (including documentation)
3. Aspirations and expectations for student achievement
4. Availability of assistance in completing school assignments at home
5. Activities that the student likes to do at home
6. Activities that the student dislikes or avoids at home
7. Student's comments about school
7. Suggestions for collaboration

Ms. Speaks, the ESOL teacher, accompanied a bilingual social worker to visit Alejandro's father at his work site. The father expressed concern that his son was having difficulties at school because he noted that Alejandro had previously commented that he was enjoying his new school. During the visit, the father related some of the group's experiences prior to and after leaving El Salvador. He expressly did not refer to the group as a family because, as he said, "We will not be a family again until my wife, Alejandro's mother, and our daughters are reunited with us here in our new country." The father indicated that he realized Alejandro missed his mother, his sisters, and his friends in El Salvador. "Everything here is so nice, so new," the father said, " but there is something missing. Even when the sun shines, we miss the warmth of our familiar surroundings."

The father related that Alejandro had only attended the local school in El Salvador briefly, for about six months, when he was

about seven years old. During that time Alejandro had learned to read and write, but he had not had many occasions to read or to write since that time. No report cards or other scholastic information were available to indicate Alejandro's progress. Although Alejandro was happy to be back in school again, the father said that he knew his son must be frustrated because he had so much to learn. He was easily embarrassed when he was not able to do the tasks that seemed easy for the other children. When Ms. Speaks probed the father about the kinds of activities that interested Alejandro, the father answered, "The boy loves cars, knows the names of all the models, draws cars on every scrap of paper he can find at home." He continued, "Every time we go to the store, Alejandro wants to buy a car magazine. I wondered if you were teaching about cars and he needed to do this for homework." In El Salvador, there were not so many different kinds of cars, so many of these cars are new to him. The father thanked the educators for their interest in his son and indicated that he would cooperate with them and help Alejandro become a more productive student. The father volunteered to talk with his son that evening and to encourage him to pay attention so that he would learn and not bother other students. He would also talk with him and encourage him to listen and follow directions.

Before leaving Alejandro's father, the educators discussed ways that they could continue to be in contact and to share information on Alejandro's progress in school. The father volunteered to visit the school during the following week and to remain in contact with the bilingual social worker to ensure that Alejandro continued to participate and to learn.

When the educators met again with the committee, they related their observations, the information that Alejandro's father had shared with them, and his interest in helping his son. After some discussion, the committee decided that perhaps Alejandro was doing as well in school as could be expected, considering the great difference between his prior and current educational experiences. Nevertheless, the committee concluded, Alejandro could not continue as he had been. He needed specific assistance if he was to learn to function with the other students. The group made a list of the types of tasks that Alejandro could do well, the ones that he could do with assistance, and the ones that appeared to be frustrating him.

Although Alejandro did not read well in Spanish, he was a willing learner. He could write in Spanish, and with some assistance his spelling was improving. He demonstrated age appropriate skills in mathematics computation. He could solve many word problems orally in Spanish. The educators listed the times during the day when

Alejandro was able to participate in instruction, when he had the skills to participate but lacked the English language proficiency, and when he lacked both the language and the academic skills. The educators brainstormed ways to increase the time that Alejandro could participate by changing the tasks in which he was expected to participate and by providing instructional support, such as visual aids, peer collaboration, and the use of the computer for word processing in English and Spanish. Then they suggested that Ms. Homes and Ms. Speaks collaborate with the other students in the class to develop ways to promote learning activities for Alejandro.

As his father had noted, Alejandro was interested in cars and enjoyed drawing and talking about them. The teachers used this information to develop activities that would be centered around cars. With other students, for example, he began to write a book about different cars. Many other students shared this interest in cars and were impressed with Alejandro's ability to draw many different cars. Until that time, the students had seen Alejandro as a strange boy who did not fit in with the rest of the class. As the students became better acquainted with Alejandro, they invited him to participate in sports activities after school. During class time the teachers organized cooperative activities that promoted sharing and collaboration. They also encouraged students to assist Alejandro so that he could participate with them. When students realized how they could help Alejandro succeed, they became actively engaged in planning activities with him. Alejandro learned question-asking and feedback strategies that enabled him to participate in class effectively (Earls, 1993).

These are only a few of the ways that the teachers began to increase Alejandro's learning opportunities. You may be able to think of many other ways that Alejandro's instructional needs could be met.

Conclusion

Alejandro Acosta represents a case of a student from a non-English-language background with minimal prior educational experiences who was placed in an instructional setting where he was expected to perform like the other students. When he realized that he was unable to do what the other students were doing, he became frustrated and disruptive. The disruptive behavior patterns led Alejandro's regular classroom teacher to suspect that his difficulties resulted from a possible behavior disorder or learning disability when, in fact, he lacked the prior educational experiences and English language proficiency needed to participate successfully.

Students who have not had formal schooling or the educational experiences of their age peers often appear developmentally different, perhaps delayed. Students who are frustrated by being expected to perform tasks beyond their comprehension may appear to have a behavior disorder or learning disability. Only after a sufficient time and appropriate instruction can decisions be made about the possible sources of students' learning difficulties. Sometimes educators delay referring LEP students for assessment and consideration in ESE programs because they believe the difficulties stem from a lack of English proficiency. Clearly, limited English language proficiency is a major obstacle that must be overcome in order for students to learn and participate. However, without effective instruction and support, students do not typically overcome the lack of English language proficiency on their own. Although they may develop English language skills, they may not acquire the academic language skills needed for success in school.

In Alejandro Acosta's case, limited English proficiency was only one of several difficulties that had to be overcome. Alejandro had been separated from his family and was unsure of their well-being; he missed his mother and the siblings who stayed in El Salvador. Alejandro did not have the prior educational experiences of the other students and was frustrated by his lack of skill and knowledge. He observed what the other students did, but he realized that he was unable to participate. He was frustrated by not being able to communicate with the teacher and the other students. Because of the assistance the committee provided to Ms. Homes, the regular classroom teacher and Ms. Speaks, the ESOL teacher, and the positive instructional climate that both teachers established, both Alejandro and his teachers were able to overcome the language barrier, the learning obstacles, and the frustrations. Here the spirit of collaboration and support became a vehicle for promoting the teachers' individual and group efforts at meeting the student's needs. An additional important factor was the insight and support that the father provided the educators. Although Ms. Homes did not speak with the father initially, she did establish contact with him through the bilingual social worker. Alejandro's father had a calming and supportive influence on his son. While this combination of factors could not make up for the lack of language proficiency and academic skills, it did provide the motivation and support needed for Alejandro to become actively engaged in the learning process. The students and the teachers provided the language and behavior models that Alejandro needed in order to learn.

Even when students may be identified as developmentally delayed or having disabilities, the most beneficial location for instruction may be the mainstream classroom with instructional support and assistance from other sources (Staff, 1993). In the next chapter, issues of language development and academic achievement are examined from the perspective of a student already receiving ESE services.

5

Meeting the Needs of Students with Identified Disabilities: The Case of Marji Cao

The committee at Newport Elementary recognized that as the general population of non-English-language background students increased, there would predictably be students with unique instructional needs. In addition to the students who would enroll with limited prior educational experiences, some students would enter school with serious, yet unidentified, learning needs and disabilities. Other non-English-language background students would arrive from schools throughout the United States and other countries with records indicating they had already been identified and placed in exceptional student education programs. Such is the case of Marji Cao, another student whose case the committee considered.

The Case of Marji Cao

Marji Cao was almost ten and a half years old when her case was reviewed by the committee. Marji was born in the United States to Vietnamese parents, both of whom received their U. S. citizenship shortly before Marji's birth. Marji's parents were proud to become U.S. citizens, and celebrated Marji's birth as a special event because she was the first of the five children to be born in the United States. The two eldest siblings, one now 20 and the other 14, were born in Vietnam. Two more children followed Marji, seven- and five-year-old girls. All three of the younger Cao children were enrolled in Newport Elementary School.

Marji had been in a part-time special education placement in Newport Elementary for the past three years and was in the fourth grade when she came to the attention of the committee. The three-year re-evaluation of her progress, a procedure required for students with ESE placements, had just been completed. Marji's regular classroom teacher, Ms. Goodheart, had reviewed the findings and brought them to the attention of the committee. Ms. Goodheart suspected that Marji might be one of the students that the committee had been talking about when they made their presentation on language development to the faculty. After reviewing the assessment documents, Ms. Goodheart was not sure she could agree with the

findings of the Child Study Team that had evaluated Marji. She believed that more information was needed in order to accurately determine Marji's current functioning. She had been encouraged by the suggestions the committee offered on the assessment process and wanted to collect more about her students' language proficiency and academic progress.

Ms. Goodheart had known the Cao family for several years. She had observed them as they came to school for open house, parent conferences, and to inquire about Marji's progress. Both parents spoke English, but their communication was somewhat labored and marked with a heavy accent. Ms. Goodheart had noticed that Marji's father was easier to understand than her mother. Both mother and father always came to school together for open house or parent conference days. The family actually lived only a few blocks from the school, so Marji and her younger sisters could walk to school. Often Mrs. Cao would walk with the children as far as the corner of the school yard and wait as the children went into the building. The family appeared to be close, the children quiet and well mannered.

Ms. Goodheart checked the Home Language Survey in Marji's records and learned that according to Mr. Cao only English was spoken in the home. But Ms. Goodheart remembered many times hearing the family speak in Vietnamese, especially when no one else was nearby. Because Marji was born in the United States, according to her records, no further consideration was given to Marji's non-English-language background. After thinking about the fact that the Cao family often communicated in Vietnamese, the possibility occurred to Ms. Goodheart that Marji might not be fully proficient in English. She might be more proficient in Vietnamese than in English. Ms. Goodheart began to review Marji's school records and to wonder if there were some way to determine her language proficiency in both English and Vietnamese.

The records indicated that Marji had been identified as having a learning disability in language development. Ms. Goodheart began to think about Marji from several different perspectives. She knew, for example, that Marji was able to discriminate and blend most sounds, but that she had difficulty identifying rhyming words. She became confused by vowels with different spelling and by short and long vowels. However, many English-proficient children also had a hard time mastering the arbitrary spelling of English, especially the vowels. Marji also had difficulty differentiating singular and plural nouns and third person singular verbs. Perhaps she really didn't hear the final /s/. As Ms. Goodheart thought about it, she realized that Marji sounded like her mother when she spoke. Mrs. Cao spoke

English somewhat haltingly, as though she were thinking about every word before she produced it. Mrs. Cao also seemed unaware that plurals were marked by final /s/. Instead, she said things like "many pencil" and "much children." Marji sometimes made the same kinds of errors. In terms of syntax and semantics, Marji had a hard time determining which words were nouns in a sentence, and she didn't seem to understand how to substitute words to change the meaning of a sentence. She was also unable to recognize synonyms and antonyms. But, again the teacher thought, isn't that what school is for? Many children need extra time to develop these skills.

There was no indication in Marji's records that she had received instruction or therapy to develop the language skills identified as deficient, only that she had been tested and found lacking in these skills. Because Marji was not in the fourth grade classroom during reading and language arts instruction, it was difficult for Ms. Goodheart to know exactly what skills Marji was being taught or what skills she was learning. No articulation had actually occurred between the ESE teacher, Ms. Support, and Ms. Goodheart regarding Marji, so it was not possible to know what Marji was being taught or how the regular and special education programs were expecting Marji to perform. Because language was the area of disability, instruction in language was the responsibility of the exceptional student education program, not the regular classroom teacher. But Ms. Support, the ESE teacher, was only in Newport for half days because her time was split between two schools.

As Ms. Goodheart thought about it, she realized that Ms. Support had not attended the inservice meetings and was not really aware of the changes that were occurring throughout the school. In fact, several of the Child Study Team members were from other schools. Perhaps these educators had not yet developed an understanding of the importance of language development in the instructional process.

Ms. Goodheart had been making the assumption that Marji's instructional needs were being met through the ESE program. However, after reading the report she was not sure. She wondered if Marji's language difficulties might be the result of interference from her use of Vietnamese, or perhaps from a hearing difficulty. There was no information about a hearing test in the report, although there was a visual acuity test that indicated that she had no visual problems. Perhaps no real consideration had been given to the use of Vietnamese as the language of communication for Marji. Marji's difficulties could be the result of language and cultural differences. Other than the piece of information from the speech-language pathologist, it appeared that Marji was being instructed as if she were

a monolingual English-speaking student, and was being penalized for not having skills she had never had the opportunity to develop.

Ms. Goodheart began to check into Marji's permanent records for more information. She learned that when Marji first enrolled in Newport in kindergarten she was one of the first students in the school from a non-English-language background. Although the record did not indicate this, Ms. Goodheart realized that at the time that Marji began school most of the teachers were not aware of the difficulties students faced when they were immersed in a new language and expected to perform as if they were English proficient. At this time, Ms. Goodheart thought, the teachers were not aware of the impact that differences in language and culture might have on the learning process. She thought that they were also probably unaware of ways that they could organize instruction to facilitate understanding and learning. Many teachers only recently had become aware of the options they might have in working with students who used other languages at home.

Ms. Goodheart found a report written by the speech-language pathologist. This document gave Ms. Goodheart some information that she thought might be important. The report indicated that some of Marji's difficulties could result from the fact that Marji also communicated in Vietnamese. Ms. Goodheart agreed.

Continuing to look through the folder, Ms. Goodheart found that there were no test results or other information about how Marji performed in terms of general communication skills. Marji was a quiet girl who seldom spoke out, seldom expressed her wants or interests, and seldom interacted with other students. In fact, she hardly ever talked at all. Ms. Goodheart couldn't remember when she had had a real conversation with Marji. Maybe Marji had few opportunities to practice language skills or to hold real conversations. Ms. Goodheart decided that she needed to start observing and interacting with Marji on a regular basis, not only to learn more about her, but to assist Marji in developing effective communication skills. As she thought about what more she would like to know about Marji, Ms. Goodheart decided that she would begin to collect language samples, as the committee had recommended, in order to determine more about Marji's language proficiency and use of language functions. She observed the demonstration of language sampling procedures during the inservice training. She knew that the process could be time consuming, but she had been impressed with the amount and the variety of information that could be obtained through language sampling. As she reflected on the process, Ms. Goodheart decided she needed more information on language

sampling in order to do an effective job of collecting and analyzing Marji's language. In the meantime, she thought, perhaps she could gain some insight by focusing on the information that was already available.

Because she had become familiar with the information in Marji's folder, Ms. Goodheart decided to show it to the committee and to ask them for suggestions about what to do next. She was encouraged by the changes taking place at the school. A few years ago, teachers had been discouraged from interfering with students' records or programs. Now teachers were expected to know what was happening with students in different programs and to cooperate in planning lessons and assessment strategies, no matter where the instruction took place. The new way seemed to be more positive, but Ms. Goodheart wondered if there would be any negative consequences of her efforts to help Marji.

The Child Study Team had determined that Marji had a learning disability in language and that she should continue in the current special education program. Everything had already been decided. Who was she, a classroom teacher with no special education training, to question these decisions? Nevertheless, Ms. Goodheart could not stop thinking about Marji. Here was a student from a different language background who had been assessed in first grade and placed in a special education program for three years where she apparently had not yet acquired the language skills that most children younger than she already had. Marji was not born in Vietnam; she was born right here. She had been exposed to English all of her life. Surely she should be able to do more than she did, unless it was true that she had a disability and really could not learn language easily.

Ms. Goodheart met with the committee and showed them the most recent reports about Marji and asked for their suggestions in determining the best course of action. She also asked for assistance in collecting language samples and other data that would be useful in developing an instructional program for Marji. Committee members agreed that the report and the picture of the assessment process it depicted provided them with a new perspective of the need for collaboration throughout the school. The members thanked Ms. Goodheart for her concern and agreed to make informal data collection with Marji a priority. The following is the information Ms. Goodheart shared with the committee. The committee's reaction to this information is indicated in italics.

Educational Report on Marji Cao

According to the report, the first part of the assessment was conducted by the exceptional education teacher during a mid-morning session in a vacant classroom at Newport Elementary School. The testing room was well lighted, ventilated, comfortable, quiet, and free from distractions. No environmental factors were noted that would adversely affect Marji's test performance. The assessment was completed in one session, requiring a total of 110 minutes. Marji entered the session without resistance and was friendly on approach. She smiled frequently, maintained adequate eye contact, and appeared comfortable in the test setting. Adequate rapport was easily established and maintained. At the time of this evaluation, Marji was neatly dressed and groomed. She demonstrated a clear preference for her right hand on all motor tasks. Her speech was intelligible and structured in complete sentences. Her comprehension of test instructions was judged adequate. She appeared to be well motivated, but tended to give up quickly if unsure of the correct answer. She resisted guessing , even when encouraged to do so. Her activity level was within normal limits, and she had no difficulty remaining seated during the 110 minute testing session. No interruptions or breaks occurred during the assessment session.

Because no placement decisions can be made based on one test or assessment procedure, both the *District Criterion Reference Checklist* and the *Diagnostic Achievement Battery* were used to determine Marji's language skill development. All standardized procedures were followed during this evaluation. The results obtained were considered to represent fair and reliable estimates of Marji's current educational and intellectual functioning.

District Criterion Reference Checklist

The information on Marji's performance on the *District Criterion Reference Checklist* is presented in Tables 5-1 and 5-2.

TABLE 5-1
DISTRICT CRITERION REFERENCE CHECKLIST

Reading Recognition:	Reading Comprehension:
1. recognizes initial consonant sounds	1. recognizes unfamiliar word meanings through the use of clues
2. recognizes final consonant and consonant cluster sounds	2. predicts outcomes
Needs to learn to:	*Needs to learn to:*
3. recognize unstressed short vowels	3. recall details, plot, and settings
4. recognize long vowel sounds	4. recognize paraphrased sentences

Committee Reaction: *The information was collected from a discrete-point, rather than a holistic assessment process. Based on this information, it appears that Marji has developed some decoding skills, but her comprehension skills are not well developed. Assessment information does not indicate how Marji uses clues. Were the clues presented in the form of pictures or words? If Marji predicted outcomes, why didn't she remember details, plot, or setting since these pieces of information are important in making predictions?*

TABLE 5-2
DISTRICT CRITERION REFERENCE CHECKLIST

English:	Written Expression Checklist:
1. can identify complete sentences	1. can locate a main idea of a paragraph
2. can identify correctly written sentences	2. can write a five-word sentence from dictation
Needs to learn to:	*Needs to learn to:*
3. correctly determine when to use a comma with compound sentences	3. write a theme from an outline
4. identify nouns in a sentence	4. supply missing words to complete sentences

Committee Reaction: *All of the assessment information focuses on the mechanics of English rather than the meaning. Has Marji been receiving instruction to develop the skills that are indicated here as deficient?*

In addition to the *District Criterion Referenced Checklist*, the Child Study Team collected information using the *Diagnostic Achievement Battery (DAB)*. This information is presented in Table 5-3.

TABLE 5-3
DIAGNOSTIC ACHIEVEMENT BATTERY (DAB)

Test Results	Raw Score	Percentiles	Standard Scores
Word Knowledge	43	5	75
Reading Comprehension	18	9	80
Capitalization	28	16	85
Punctuation	5	5	75
Spelling	4	2	70
Written Vocabulary	3	25	90

Test Interpretations:

The following information explains Marji's performance on the *Diagnostic Achievement Battery* subtests:

Word Knowledge is a measure of basic reading skills and assesses knowledge of letters and phonics at the lower level and word recognition skills at the higher level items. Marji's standard score of 75 falls in the range of poor academic functioning. This score is considered to be moderately deficient when compared with those scores obtained by others of the same chronological age.

Reading Comprehension assesses the student's skill in reading short passages silently and answering orally presented problems about them. This assessment method is generally more desirable than the cloze technique or the multiple choice format because the DAB more closely approximates classroom reading activities and tests. Marji's standard score of 80 falls in the range of low average academic language functioning. This score indicates mild deficiency when compared with those scores obtained by others of the same chronological age.

Capitalization and Punctuation assesses errors in capitalization and punctuation from a written paragraph. Marji's standard score of 85 falls in the range of below average academic functioning. This score is considered to be mildly deficient when compared with those scores obtained by others of the same chronological age.

Spelling assesses the student's performance in writing words from dictation. Marji's standard score of 70 falls in the range of poor academic functioning. This score is considered to be moderately deficient when compared with those scores obtained by others of the same chronological age.

Written Vocabulary assesses the student's ability to write a story that has a beginning, middle, and end based upon the student's selection of pictures from a set of photographs. The maturity of the vocabulary used in the story is evaluated by counting the number of seven-letter words written. Marji obtained a raw score of 3 by repeating the word "laughing" three times in her story. The resulting standard score of 90 falls in the range of average academic functioning. This score is considered not to be deficient when compared with those scores obtained by others of the same chronological age.

Committee Reaction: *These subtests are all basically ways of determining Marji's skills with the mechanics of the English language. Neither the* DAB *nor the criterion referenced checklist provides information on Marji's development in making meaning.*

In addition to specific subtest scores, composite scores can also be computed for various combinations of subtests. Such composite scores based on a mean of 100 and standard deviation of 15 allow estimates of a student's abilities on the components and constructs incorporated into the Diagnostic Assessment Battery. *Following the method presented in the test manual for obtaining these composite values, Marji obtained a* Written Language Composite Quotient *of 73, which falls in the range of poor academic functioning. This score is considered to be moderately deficient when compared with those scores obtained by others of the same chronological age.*

While the testing appears to be comprehensive and complies with the letter of the law, it does not serve to provide insight into Marji as an engaged learner or real person. Both the Diagnostic Achievement Battery *and the* District Criterion Reference Checklist *focus on discrete skills not related to authentic communication or meaning. Keeping a student who has a disability in language working on the assessment of language skills for the duration of 110 minutes--almost two hours without a break--does not appear to be appropriate assessment procedures and may be counterproductive to obtaining the most accurate measures of the student's actual performance.*

Teacher Report of Social, Emotional Behavior

No problems were indicated in the parent interview or in the teacher narrative. Therefore, assessment of social and emotional behavior was not warranted. This information was not included within the report.

Committee Reaction: *The decision not to include information on the student's social and emotional behavior as a part of the overall assessment process appears to indicate an approach to testing that results in a "problem locating" rather than a "problem solving" approach to education. Assessment should provide educators with insight into the student's strengths as well as limitations. It is known that Marji is quiet and well mannered. Little is known about what she actually does.*

Report from the School Psychologist

Weschler Intelligence Scale for Children—Revised (WISC—R) is an individually administered measure of intellectual ability. It is designed to assess a child's potential for understanding and reasoning within the environment. The test is composed of six verbal and six performance subtests. The verbal subtests assess the child's verbal comprehension while the performance subtests assess the child's overall perceptual organizational skills. This information is presented in Table 5-4.

TABLE 5-4
WESCHLER INTELLIGENCE SCALE FOR CHILDREN—REVISED (WISC—R)

Standard Verbal Tests	Standard Score	Performance Tests	Score
Information	3	Picture Completion	9
Similarities	3	Picture Arrangement	9
Arithmetic	8	Block Design	7
Vocabulary	7	Object Assembly	9
Comprehension	2	Coding	12
Digit Span	9	Mazes	NA
Verbal IQ	67	Performance	93
		Full Scale: 78	

WISC-R Test Interpretations

On this administration of the *WISC-R*, Marji obtained a *Verbal IQ* of 67, a *Performance IQ* of 93, and a *Full Scale IQ* of 78. The probability is 95 out of 100 that her true *Full Scale IQ* would fall between 71 and 84. This level of functioning exceeds 9% of the children Marji's age taking the test. These results indicate that her overall level of functioning is in the borderline range. A significant verbal-performance discrepancy of 26 points was yielded in favor of her *Performance Quotient*, reflecting impaired language ability (Boyan, 1985). Consideration of each scale separately indicates that Marji's scores on the verbal tests ranged from 2 to 8, with a mean scaled score of 4.6. Considerable scatter was revealed with three subtest scores falling below two standard deviations from the test mean for her chronological age. She demonstrated relative strength on the arithmetic subtest with a score which fell within one standard deviation from the test mean. The arithmetic subtest measures numerical accuracy, reasoning, and mental arithmetical ability. A precise answer, concentration, and attention are required. On the *Performance Scale*, Marji's subtest scores ranged from 7 to 12 and produced a mean scaled score of 9.2. All of her performance subtests scores fell at or within one standard deviation from the test mean for her chronological age. She demonstrated relatively consistent non-verbal abilities with no notable strengths or weaknesses (Weschler, 1974).

Summary of Assessment Information and Recommendations for Instruction

Marji has always lived in this school district, in a neighborhood where she has been exposed to English since birth and where she currently attends school. After attending Head Start, kindergarten, and first grade, Marji was ruled eligible for and placed in a specific learning disabilities program when she was seven years old and has received special education services since that time. Marji was referred for testing to complete the third year re-evaluation of this placement. Although she has continued to encounter academic difficulties in reading, math, and English, Marji has not repeated any grades. She has previously been ruled eligible for the special education category of specific learning disability and has participated in that program for nearly three years. Marji has not received any related special education support services.

Based on this comprehensive triannual assessment, Marji did not have problems in the areas of physical or social/emotional disorders.

The results of the assessment indicated that Marji has problems in the area of language development. The results of the other assessment data, the *DAB* and the *District Criterion Checklist*, substantiated discrepancies found between the verbal and performance ability measured on the *WISC-R*. Based on these data and in accordance with state department eligibility criteria, Marji Cao's handicapping condition is specific learning disabilities in the area of language learning. Instruction should focus on sound discrimination, development of written expression skills, and basic reading skills.

Committee's Decision and Ms. Goodheart's Responses

After considering the report, the committee and the principal decided that Marji would be better off in the regular education program. When Ms. Goodheart learned of the committee's suggestion to keep Marji in the regular education program rather than continuing in the part-time ESE program, she felt a great sense of responsibility for ensuring that Marji become a successful full-time member of the regular classroom. She requested that the committee assist her in implementing an instructional plan that would promote Marji's learning without taking away from the learning opportunities of the other students.

Language sampling was an area that Ms. Goodheart believed would be helpful in enabling her to informally determine Marji's language development when communicating in meaningful contexts. She also wanted to learn more about the assessment of narrative development as a means for determining the type and level of reading materials that would be appropriate for Marji. She had been thinking about the language sampling process since the committee made a presentation to the faculty about the information that could be obtained by actually being aware of how students use language. She started collecting information in two ways: (a) by developing tasks that would tap into different language functions and recording Marji as she interacted with other students in completing the tasks; and (b) by watching and listening to Marji as she communicated with other adults and students (Fradd & Larrinaga McGee, 1993).

Ms. Goodheart made a checklist on which she recorded Marji's performance using a variety of language functions, such as reporting, justifying, predicting, projecting, and self-maintaining (Tough 1976, 1977). After several weeks of observing, listening, and recording

Marji's interactions with other students in social and academic contexts, Ms. Goodheart summarized Marji's performance. She rated the performance in four levels. Where Marji's language was easily understood, at least 90% grammatically correct, and pragmatically appropriate, the sample was rated as adequate. When Marji tried to communicate and her performance was understandable but contained obvious grammatical errors, phonological distortions, or was not pragmatically appropriate, the sample was rated developmental. Samples where Marji tried but did not communicate meaningfully were rated as initial. There were times when Marji did not communicate, and in fact, appeared to avoid communicating. These were rated as noncommunication. Ms. Goodheart observed that Marji appeared to communicate more effectively with some people than others. In the summary, the students with whom Marji communicated most effectively and least effectively and the contexts of the communication, social or academic, are also included as a way of comparing and contrasting performances. The information on Marji's performance is presented in Table 5-5.

TABLE 5-5
SUMMARY OF MARJI CAO'S LANGUAGE FUNCTION PERFORMANCE

Creating	Self Maintaining	Reporting	Predicting	Justifying	Projecting	Reasoning
adequate social Mary & Nancy	adequate social Mary & Nancy	devel. academic reading group	initial academic reading group	initial social Ms. Goodheart	non-com. academic reading group	adequate academic Ms. Goodheart
devel. social Mr. Bell	devel. social	devel. social girls at play	devel. academic Ms. Goodheart	develop social sister	initial social Ms. Goodheart	develop academic reading group
non-comm. social Bill, Tom, & Mary	devel. social girls at play	adequate social Mary & Nancy	X	develop social Mary	X	non-com. social boys

By summarizing the data in the chart, Ms. Goodheart began to notice patterns in Marji's performance. For example, Marji was able to perform four functions (creating, self-maintaining, reporting, and reasoning) at an adequate level, in both social and academic contexts (Tough, 1976, 1977). However, Marji performance was not consistent across contexts. For example, there are no instances when Marji performed adequately in groups of more than two or with boys. In

fact, when interacting with boys Marji's performance was generally non-communicative; she tried to avoid communicating with them altogether. By observing communicating patterns, Ms. Goodheart realized that Marji had developed a variety of language skills and could use different language functions to achieve specific outcomes. By examining these patterns, Ms. Goodheart developed ways to form groups for instruction so that Marji would perform comfortably and successfully with students with whom she felt comfortable.

There are other patterns that can be observed in these data and other ways that this information can be used to enhance learning opportunities for Marji. What patterns do you see in Marji's performance? How would you use this information to modify both the instructional process and the ways that Marji is assessed?

In addition to examining Marji's use of language functions, Ms. Goodheart considered Marji's narrative development. She had learned how to collect samples of the students telling and retelling stories and relate this information on narrative development to the selection of stories to be used in reading instruction (Hedburg & Stoel-Gammon, 1986). She thought that this type of information might also be insightful in planning a relevant program for Marji (Fradd, Barona, & Santos de Barona, 1989). Making reading instruction at or slightly above Marji's level of development of narrative could also reduce the frustration she was experiencing in reading material that was difficult to understand. It would also enable Ms. Goodheart to monitor Marji's progress in a systematic manner and ensure that she was increasing her reading and language skills (Fradd et al., 1989).

Everyone who had been involved in reviewing the assessment information and developing the plan for Marji was pleased with the outcomes. The ESE personnel, especially Ms. Support, worked with Ms. Goodheart to make the transition to full-time regular placement smooth and successful for Marji. Ms. Support became so interested in the way Ms. Goodheart collected language information that she began to use the process with her students. Ms. Support found the information helpful in planning instruction as well as monitoring students' progress. This exchange of ideas provided the foundation for further collaboration between the regular and the ESE programs as Ms. Support and Ms. Goodheart established additional ways to assist the other students that they had in common.

Once collaborative procedures to meet Marji's educational needs had been established among the different educators within the school, the committee suggested that Marji's family be invited to contribute to the instructional modifications already being made on

Marji's behalf. The parents had been informed of the assessment results and of the committee's suggestion that Marji be transitioned into full-time placement in a regular education program. The family's support had been enlisted in explaining to Marji the changes that would be occurring at school. After this transition had been made, the family was once again involved in Marji's instructional program. This time they were asked to assist the teachers in identifying the types of activities that Marji enjoyed at home, the ways that she interacted with her siblings and other family members at home, and ways that the school and the home could collaborate in ensuring that Marji's needs were met. At no time were the family members told that they should speak to Marji only in English. Nor were any of the communication patterns that occurred at home called into question in terms of suggesting that they could be the cause of Marji's limitations. The family was encouraged to use whatever communication patterns they had already established, and to continue to talk to Marji as they always had. In fact, it was suggested that the family might want to obtain books and other reading materials in Vietnamese and to encourage Marji to use the language skills she had already developed to further develop written language skills in Vietnamese.

Ms. Cao was invited to accompany Marji not only to the corner of the school yard, but into the classrooms to observe the lessons that Marji was learning. On the first day that Ms. Cao came to the classroom door, she entered shyly and sat near Marji. At first the students, who had already been informed that visits from Ms. Cao could be anticipated, were reluctant to interact with Marji when her mother was in the room. However, as Ms. Cao continued to visit school during the mornings, the other students became accustomed to her presence and soon interacted as normal. Some of the students asked if their parents could also come to school. Ms. Goodheart agreed. She thought that it would be a wonderful idea to have the parents join in the classroom, either informally or by establishing regular visiting times as long as these visits did not distract from the instructional program.

One day Ms. Cao asked Ms. Goodheart if Marji could borrow one of the texts that Marji had shown her. The previous evening Ms. Cao said that she had noticed that Marji had been playing school with her sisters. When asked about what she was doing, Marji said that she liked school more now and wanted to help her sisters so they would not have any problems. Then she talked about the literature book that she especially liked and told her mother about the stories she was reading and listening to at school. She especially liked the collection

of Cinderella stories from all over the world. There were Cinderella-type stories from Europe, Africa, and Asia. Marji was especially interested in the Asian Cinderella who, she thought, looked like her. Ms. Goodheart was happy to share the text and set up a means for allowing Ms. Cao to borrow books on a regular basis.

Many factors came together to promote Marji Cao's success including the collaboration between regular and ESE educators, the family support, Marji's own motivation, and the efforts of the committee to promote expectations for Marji's successful participation. No one factor could be isolated as being more important than another, but together these factors provided the instructional support that enabled Marji to learn to function successfully within the mainstream. The success that Marji experienced provided several important but unanticipated outcomes. Her interest in learning became an important part of the after-school activities that occurred at home as the family continued to work with the educators to ensure that all of the Cao children developed the literacy skills needed to participate effectively in school. They also became more proficient and knowledgeable in the use of Vietnamese as well. Because of the collaboration between the regular and ESE programs, other students who were experiencing academic difficulties were provided with the instruction they needed to become successful learners.

Analysis of Marji Cao's Case

The case of Marji Cao is a prototype of many students from non-English language backgrounds who are not successful in school. Although Marji was born in the United States and had been exposed to English all of her life, she had been raised in an environment where Vietnamese, rather than English, had been the vehicle of communication. As a result of the communication patterns and the culture of her home, Marji did not enter school with the same set of experiences and language skills as the other students of her age. Because Marji was one of the first students to enter the school from a non-English-language background, the educators were not prepared to identify and address her unique needs. Instead, when they observed that Marji was encountering learning difficulties, the educators referred her for ESE placement. The data collected on Marji's performance using standardized assessment procedures further substantiated the difference between Marji's performance on verbal tasks and her performance on tasks that did not require oral language skills. The result of this assessment was the determination that the discrepancy between Marji's verbal and performance

measures provided evidence that she did indeed have a learning disability in the area of language development. Marji's daily behavior, combined with her performance on standardized discrete-point tests used to specify her particular language difficulties, provided further proof of Marji's particular needs and limitations.

Without the information gathered by the classroom teacher on Marji's language background, her family history, and her use of language in different contexts, developing a program that included the specific activities, instructional groupings, and the motivation needed for successful learning might not have been possible. Without the support provided by the committee for reconsidering Marji's learning needs and in reconceptualizing the ways that instruction could be provided to meet these needs, Marji might have continued in a program that was not successful in meeting her special learning needs.

It was never made clear whether Marji had a learning disability in the area of language learning. Language use is not a strength for Marji. She may never be an effective communicator. There is no intrinsic value in labels. Whether Marji carries the label "learning disabled" or "non-English-language background learner" only has relevance to the educational process if instruction is provided that enables Marji to acquire the skills and knowledge base necessary to function successfully. Marji had been placed in a part-time ESE program for three years, yet she had not developed the skills that had been identified as essential for her academic success. Because the type of outcomes that had been specified as essential had not actually occurred, other alternative options, such as full-time regular classroom placement, were considered. However, simply returning Marji to a regular program full time was also not a viable alternative, unless there was support and an appropriate instructional program that would enable her to succeed in this new placement.

Several events occurred that provided the support necessary for both Marji and her teachers to make this successful transition. These include (a) the comprehensive inservice training that had occurred across the school on second language development and assessment that provided all of the educators with a common base of knowledge; (b) the expectations that had been established to promote collaboration within and across grades and instructional programs;. (c) the encouragement the educators had received for involving families in the learning process; (d) the specific support the committee provided in suggesting that the assessment information developed by the Child Study Team did not accurately represent Marji's educational needs; (e) the release time Ms. Goodheart

received that enabled her to review records, collect language samples, and conduct observations; and (f) the specific support Ms. Goodheart and Ms. Support received that enabled them to develop effective plans for transitioning Marji back to the regular classroom. These events could, in part, be considered as technical support for the instructional process in that, as a result of these events, a series of important actions occurred. At the same time, these events do not constitute a sustained effort at creating the technical support typical regular classroom teachers require in order to meet the unique needs of students with limited language development. In addition to the support listed above, classroom teachers require a great deal of inservice training in selecting and using materials and procedures to meet students' needs. They also require regularly scheduled planning times where they can familiarize themselves with resources, make informed selections, and carry out procedures for conducting informal assessment plans. Without the support of an educational system that emphasizes the importance of meeting individual student needs by supporting teachers, individual teachers such as Ms. Goodheart may develop viable solutions, but these will be the exception rather than the rule.

An Extension of Marji's Case

By the end of the school year, the committee was pleased with the progress that had been made in meeting the needs of students who were learning English as a new language. While the members recognized that there was still a great deal to be done, they also knew that significant changes had been made within the school. The principal asked to be a part of the final committee meeting of the year. At the meeting, she praised the committee for the accomplishments and enumerated the areas of positive outcomes. Then she concluded with a request that the committee continue to work during the summer to develop suggestions for specific practices and procedures. The area of greatest concern was the interface between ESE, ESOL, and regular programs and services. She said that the state was considering the issue of inclusion but that the state had not yet made final policy decisions. News of the Newport Elementary School efforts had reached the State Office of Alternative Programs, which had contacted the principal with a request that Newport become a pilot school in which to try out and field test innovative practices. The school would be given a grant to promote the planning process with the funding beginning in the summer. Committee members would devote four weeks to full-time work in reviewing current procedures and offering suggestions for increasing multicultural perspectives in the

instruction and assessment process. Exceptional student education personnel were also invited to participate in the planning process so that a team of experts could be formed for the following school year. The principal said that this new collaborative effort would be essential to carry on the school reform that had been implemented during this past year.

Members of both groups were happy to have the opportunity to work together during the summer. They produced the suggestions listed in Table 5-6.

TABLE 5-6
SUGGESTED PRACTICES FOR IDENTIFYING THE EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF STUDENTS LEARNING ENGLISH AS A NEW LANGUAGE

PLANNING FOR REFERRAL AND ASSESSMENT

- Notify parents and involve them through personal contact, school visits, review of students' work, and the use of their suggestions and observations
- Collect written and oral language samples in both of the student's languages to determine language proficiency and development in both languages.
- Include cultural informants in determining the need for assessment, and, where appropriate, in developing a culturally relevant assessment plan and process.
- Use trained bilingual personnel to obtain background information and to promote family involvement in the assessment process.
- Use trained bilingual personnel in the use of informal assessment measures to evaluate student's academic skills.
- Develop procedures for integrating information obtained from a variety of sources, such as instructional interventions, home and school visits, interactions with the family, and student observations.
- Others. (This is an on-going process. Time and space should be made available to enable educators to continue to plan and identify ways to promote effective practices.)

ASSESSMENT

- When it is necessary to use an interpreter, use only bilingual personnel who have been trained as interpreters and in the specific assessment procedures to be used with the student.
- When interpreters are used, the personnel who use their services should also be appropriately trained.
- Document the names and dates when interpreters are used and include this information in any formal or informal reports of assessment results.
- Use only translated materials in informal assessment. If translations are made, they should be reviewed by several educated native speakers proficient in the language. Where

possible, back translations should be made, and the translations revised where there are discrepancies between the original and the back translated versions.

- Use a variety of formal and informal assessment procedures.
- Use assessment personnel who have been trained to administer and interpret results from a multicultural perspective while maintaining the validity and reliability of the standardized procedures.
- Others. (This is an on-going process. Time and space should be made available to enable educators to continue to plan and identify ways to promote effective practices.)

PLACEMENT-MAKING DECISIONS

- Include bilingual/bicultural personnel in decision-making process.
- Consider language learning needs and cultural backgrounds of the students.
- Keep the family informed and, if possible, involved in the process.
- Develop an evaluation plan for determining how student's progress will be monitored.
- Make results available in English and in the student's native language for family and committee members.
- Others. (This is an on-going process. Time and space should be made available to enable educators to continue to plan and identify ways to promote effective practices.)

INSTRUCTIONAL PLANNING AND INSTRUCTION

- Use the student's native language and culture in academic instruction and social skill development.
- Incorporate language development strategies into instruction.
- Incorporate multicultural concepts and recommendations of multicultural informants.
- Ensure that procedures are in place for monitoring student progress and adjusting instruction to meet student's needs in each subject area.
- Develop the student's social as well as academic language through instruction and interpersonal interactions.
- Others. (This is an on-going process. Time and space should be made available to enable educators to continue to plan and to identify ways to promote effective practices.)

ACHIEVEMENT REVIEW

- Include opportunities to use the student's native language in each evaluation plan.
- Measure progress in terms of both academic achievement and social skill development.
- Involve family throughout the instruction and evaluation process.
- Others.

Once the team had completed the task of preparing suggestions for enhancing the assessment and decision-making process, they turned

their attention toward the development of a document that might be useful in training the faculty about the new types of assessment and decision-making procedures that are becoming available for working with students who are learning English as a new language. Their goal was to develop a plan and systematic program that would not only specify procedures that should be followed but also provide educators with the support required to implement the procedures.

6
Organizing to Promote Success

As the previous chapters have illustrated, there is a strong movement within many schools and school districts, as well as at the federal and state level, to implement changes that will make the education process accessible and relevant to all students. While a great deal remains to be done, the changes occurring in both the preparation of educators and the tasks that they are expected to perform in order to include culturally diverse students within the mainstream of education suggest the potential for system-wide positive change. In addition to the positive developments highlighted in the previous chapters, other important changes include the the shift toward informal assessment. Informal assessment procedures enable educators to determine students' needs and monitor progress while continuing the focus on instruction and learning (Fradd & Larrinaga McGee, 1993; Klingner, 1993).

While the trend to use more inclusive instruction and informal assessment procedures is gaining increasing interest with some professional groups and educators, it has received only mild support or interest from some of the agencies and institutions responsible for educating students with limited English proficiency. Reluctance to use informal measures stems, in part, from litigation in the 1970s when LEP students were found to have been inappropriately placed in special education programs (Fradd & Vega, 1987; Kretschmer, 1991). Institutions and agencies have been reluctant to use informal measures because, by definition, such measures are not standardized or uniform, and are therefore subjective and subject to human error. Obtaining accurate informal assessment information about students who are learning English requires that those who perform the assessment procedures understand child language development, the acquisition of new languages, and the instructional process. Some school systems use a combination of formal and informal procedures for collecting information about students and integrating it into the decision-making process (Hamayan & Damico, 1991).

As the assessment process becomes more comprehensive and meaningful, schools are also learning that by developing meaningful small group instructional activities and using students' performance as a point of instruction and discussion, students can learn to regulate their own learning and become effective learners. While effective

students typically learn how to control their learning, those at risk of educational failure typically do not. By providing students with the scaffolding for obtaining the same skills and strategies as effective learners, it is possible to promote not only the students' engagement in learning but to significantly increase their reading comprehension. For students identified as learning disabled and functioning in English as a new language, this is an important outcome. Such positive outcomes have the potential to make a difference in the long-term achievement of the students, but also in the ways that instruction is conceptualized and generalized for other learners with similar needs (Klingner, 1993).

Because assessment has traditionally been seen as occurring apart from instruction or after instruction, teachers have failed to take advantage of much of the information students provide. By integrating assessment with instruction, teachers can gain information about their students' needs *while* they are learning, rather than after the fact, when the students might be found to be unsuccessful. Being aware of students' needs enables teachers to modify instruction to provide meaningful activities and relevant feedback as well as to enhance the ways that content or subject matter knowledge is developed (Fradd & Lee, in press). This chapter focuses on educational changes that are promoting the effective organization of instruction and assessment and that enhance opportunities for success for culturally and linguistically diverse students.

Using Instructional Assessment

One of the most significant changes occurring in the field of educational assessment is the development of instructional assessment measures. Instructional assessment is a means of gathering information on what individual students do and the procedures they use to achieve an outcome or to produce a product. Performance measures include products, such as students' personal story books, as well as processes, such as students' explanations and oral stories. Some school districts are devising procedures for systematically collecting samples of students' work in what they are calling "student portfolios." The use of portfolios and other performance assessment products provides a comprehensive record of the types of activities in which students participate as well as measures of what they are actually able to accomplish. The use of this type of student data collection shifts the focus of responsibility for achievement from the students to an interaction between teachers and students. Development of reliable evaluative products to measure the performance of large groups of students has yet to be

perfected (Paulson, Paulson, & Meyer, 1991); however, the use of performance measures holds great promise, especially for students with unique educational needs who may be capable of high levels of academic performance, but who may have difficulty making their performance conform to standardized formats or the language of instruction. By training bilingual personnel, performance measures can be gathered using both of the student's languages. Strengths and learning needs can be observed in both languages and decisions can be made about the utility and the application of this assessment information in developing specific instructional plans for individuals and small groups of students (Fradd & Larrinaga McGee, 1993).

Student progress requires careful monitoring to ensure that academic growth is maintained. Informal activities can provide teachers with information on how students respond to learning tasks that may be prerequisite for grade level performance (Fitzgerald & Miramontes, 1987). Review of records, observations, interviews with the target students, their peers, and their family members can provide insight into the ways that the target students work best and the goals that they want to achieve. Language samples, work samples, and specific informal tests can also provide a great deal of information about the selection of materials and activities for the special needs of the target students (Baca et al., 1990). The instructional process can be enhanced when the target students themselves become actively engaged in selecting and producing their best and most representative samples (Fradd & Larrinaga McGee, 1993).

Promoting Success Through Effective Assessment Procedures

By observing students' language performance in both English and their home language, educators can determine the students' proficiency in both languages and their language dominance—that is, the language in which the student is best able to communicate. Language dominance can vary from topic to topic; for example, students may be able to discuss home and community better in their native language but academic topics related to school better in English.

Collecting language samples over a period of time in a variety of situations provides a more comprehensive picture of a student's proficiency than a single measure (Vazquez-Montilla, 1991), since students are not always at one specific level, nor does language develop in the same sequential manner for all learners. Language

features often emerge at different ages, and their emergence reveals that students are in the process of developing aspects of language. Language proficiency encompasses a range of characteristics and functions. Instruction and activities should be at or slightly above the students' level of proficiency, build on what students know and can do, and provide students with ways to synthesize and integrate the information they are acquiring. Students will continue to require practice and opportunities to use the language in natural settings in order to increase language proficiency. As students mature cognitively, they are able to grasp new aspects of language (Gallimore & Tharp, 1991).

Many books have recently been published on the development of effective informal assessment procedures for determining and meeting the instructional needs of students with limited English proficiency. A few of these materials on the following topics are referenced here for the reader's convenience:

- assessment of culturally and linguistically diverse learners (American Psychological Association, 1979);

- informal language assessment (Fradd, Barona & Santos de Barona, 1989; Fradd & Larrinaga McGee, 1993; Hamayan & Damico, 1991; Ramirez, 1990);

- whole language development and written language (de la Luz Reyes, 1992; Freeman & Freeman, 1990; Hudelson, 1989);

- achievement and psychoeducational assessment (Baca & Cervantes; 1989; Caterino, 1990; Cloud, 1991; Holtzman & Wilkinson, 1991; Ulibarri, 1990; Wilen & Sweeting, 1986).

Instructional Planning and Implementation

One of the most important, yet overlooked, aspects of the process of educating students is the design of individualized instructional approaches and the implementation and procedures for monitoring these approaches. While federal legislation requires that students be assessed in their native language, it does not require that instruction be conducted in a language other than English (Fradd & Vega, 1987). The rationale for the use of the student's native language becomes compelling when students have difficulties learning English or exhibit some type of learning disability (Baca & Cervantes, 1989). Students eligible for ESE services are also eligible for "related services," including developmental, corrective instruction, support

such as speech and language pathology and audiology, psychological services, physical and occupational therapy, and recreational and counseling services as may be required to enable a student to benefit from special education programs (P. L. 94-142). The use of the native language could be considered a form of educational support. New emphasis has been placed on meeting the needs of students in ESE under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) legislation (P. L. 101-476). This Act also emphasizes the importance of language support in instruction as well as assessment (Staff, 1991). Therefore, while federal law does not require bilingual instruction, the use of students' native languages in the instructional process when students have been identified as having a learning disability or other exceptional education need should be considered an important and necessary instructional support.

The case studies discussed in this monograph provide insight into typical difficulties encountered by students from non-English-language backgrounds who are enrolled in the nation's schools. Many students who experience frustration in developing academic and language skills are identified as exhibiting emotional problems and learning disabilities. The case of Alejandro Acosta exemplifies the instructional needs of students learning English as a new language, which can be addressed by promoting collaboration between educators, by reorganizing classroom procedures, by making instruction concrete and contextualized, and by creating a supportive learning environment that involves other students. The case of Marji Cao illustrates the difficulty that many school systems face in identifying and defining the needs of students who do not conform to mainstream expectations. While Marji demonstrated English language proficiency, she did not have the necessary language skills to perform as an English-proficient student. While the educational system had labeled Marji as learning disabled, the actual presence or absence of a disability was never determined. Instead, the case focused on Marji's academic and social development and ways that school success could be promoted through effective assessment and instruction. These cases integrate information presented earlier in the form of research findings and suggestions. There are students who have learning difficulties beyond the scope of typical classroom resources, yet these students also need and deserve to be provided with meaningful and appropriate instruction.

The past several decades have seen significant changes in public education in the United States. If the nation is to remain economically strong, all students must be educated to develop their potential abilities and talents. Reform efforts implemented at

Newport Elementary School exemplify the efforts occurring across the nation to organize and implement programs that meet the needs of all students, including those who may have disabilities and use languages other than English to communicate. This text has provided a case study of educators seeking to operationalize the reforms required in many school systems to provide effective instructional programs for the nation's school-aged learners. These reforms impact not only the students for whom they are intended, but also the many other students within the system. The reform process impacts not only the learner, but the educators providing the instruction and support services.

Comprehensive inservice efforts are needed to enhance educators' skills in working with culturally and linguistically diverse students. Coordinated preservice efforts are required to ensure that future educators are prepared to work with students from diverse language backgrounds. Three areas of training require attention if educators are to develop the requisite skills and knowledge base. These include (a) an emphasis on selecting and adapting curricula and instructional materials to meet the needs of specific individuals and groups; (b) skill in using informal assessment procedures to identify students' strengths and instructional needs and monitor their progress; and (c) collaborative strategies to implement system changes and comprehensive programs to address both the unique needs of individuals and small groups of learners. The skills required for each of these areas must be developed by educators in institutions of higher education as well as by educators working in the field.

As the nation moves toward becoming a more interconnected, interdependent society than ever before in its history, the importance of providing effective educational programs for all school-aged children and youth is becoming a priority. The support of policymakers, administrators, and educators in general is an essential ingredient. Collaboration in creating the vision for how this process will be carried out is also becoming a central part of the planning process. Understanding and addressing the needs of students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds is central to this visionary planning process, if all learners are to be included in the potential benefits of achieving an informed, literate, and participatory public.

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